Rise and Fall

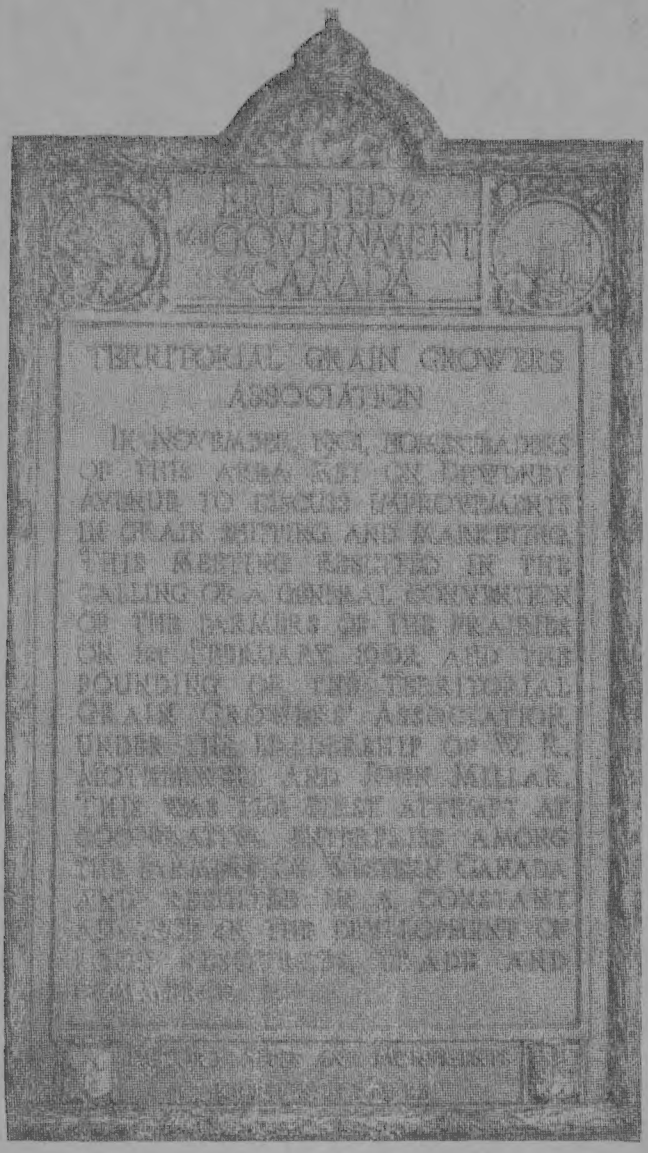
of

Canadian Farm Organizations

by

J. SCHULZ

Erected by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, in 1955, at Indian Head, Saskatchewan, in recognition of the achievements resulting from the organization of the Territorial Grain Growers Association in November, 1901, at Indian Head.



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Foreword

From time immemorial men have shown a disposition to band themselves together in groups. One time they have banded together for self-preservation, and another time with a vision of a happier state of affairs where injustice will have vanished.

Ever since agriculture first began in Canada, farmers have from time to time become extremely discontented, which has resulted in them periodically joining together to form organizations on the assumption that "in Union there is Strength" and success is attained in proportion to unity of purpose.

Their problems were numerous and their injustices deep-seated. The age-old plan — that they who have the power shall take, and they who have, shall keep — has been used in its most cruel form in dealing with the primary producers. These hard-working, hard-sweating and often financially hard-pressed individualists, living isolated and uninformed, too often became a prey to organized schemes of speculation and manipulation.

Although their faces were often red from anger over the treatment received from the hands of organized profiteers and oppressors, there was little they could do. They were helpless and sometimes hopeless. They became soured, and cursed their lot from the bottom of their hearts, as they could see no more than a lifetime of grinding toil ahead.

Still, there were some great spirits among them. They had a vision of better days to come at a time when it would

have been so easy to lose heart and become discouraged. They knew that farmers could help themselves by working together as a group organized for mutual aid, instead of following the maxim of "every man for himself". Only by combined effort, through organization and united action, could they grasp the horns of inequity and redress their grievances.

They advocated the formation of organizations wherein their ideas could be transformed into objectives and their policies into solutions. They organized and gradually improved their position, and began to climb upward, hoping that some day they would reach the peak of "equality" where they could reap the harvest of their work, and where the farm family would come into its own God-given right to a fuller and better life.

Unfortunately, however, unlike other groups in Canadian society, Canadian agriculturists have been unable to build and retain a strong, permanent educational and protective organization to maintain a position of "parity" with other organized groups. In the past one hundred years farmers have started and lost not less than a dozen farm organizations. This interrupted development and lack of cohesion are responsible for the ever-increasing "disparity" between agriculture and other Canadian industries.

An attempt has been made in these pages to find out the reason, or reasons, for the failure of these farm organizations, by tracing their origin and rise, outlining their policies and achievements, and pointing out in particular the causes for their downfall. A short chapter has been devoted to each organization in the order of its appearance on the Canadian agricultural scene, for the purpose of giving a complete picture of what has transpired in the past so that it may provide a guide for the present and for the future.

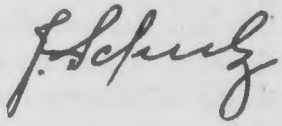
The assembled material has been drawn from many different sources of Canadian historical writings, scholarly works, articles and results of personal research. I have not hesitated

to draw from any available source in order to derive, from the mistakes of the past, some lesson that may serve to determine a course for the future in our efforts to build a lasting farm organization.

If this book fulfills even to a small degree the aspirations which motivated it, its purpose will have been well served.

To those who have contributed toward the contents of this abbreviated history of Canadian farm organizations — some, indeed, without knowing it — I have tried wherever possible to show my appreciation by giving recognition through the inclusion of numerous footnotes. To those contributors, and to others who have assisted in the preparation of this work without any particular acknowledgment, my sincere thanks are extended. May the pleasure of unselfish service be their reward.

If this material proves as interesting and instructive to those who read it, as the research was to those who prepared it, the effort has been well worth while.



CHAPTER 1

THE VERY FIRST FARM MOVEMENTS IN CANADA

1789 - 1872

Canada has always been a land of rich promise and unlimited possibilities. Its millions of unoccupied acres provide an irresistible lure which draws settlers from across the sea to face the hardships of pioneer life in the hope that the new world will offer to them and their children a better chance of advancement and security.

The challenging problems confronting the first settlers on Canadian farms took all the courage and resourcefulness that true pioneers could muster. Isolated in a new country, their life was hard and dangerous. Their struggle with nature, and the task of hewing out for themselves and their families a home in the wilderness stands forth in Canadian history as an epic of determination.

They were rugged men, standing on their own rough-shod feet. They were self-reliant and liked to work out their problems independently, but they found that what they could not do on their own could be done through co-operation with their neighbours. Their early co-operation took the form of "bees" for raising their buildings and harvesting their crops.

Although in the beginning too deeply engrossed in their personal fight for existence to concern themselves with more than the most common domestic problems, the early settlers of this new land were gradually driven by the pressure of circumstances to consider the overall and basic needs of their industry. They were forced to find solutions to problems related to the production as well as to the marketing of their produce. They

had to learn to co-operate and unite in a form of mutual assistance, to combine their efforts in organizations that had as their objective the betterment of the farming industry.

The first organizations formed in Canada, that had as their objective the improvement of agriculture, began to rise in eastern Canada in the latter part of the eighteenth century and were known as "Agriculture Societies". These organizations were modelled after the agriculture societies of Britain and the United States. Practical farming was not a qualification for membership. The groups met periodically to discuss practical as well as technical agricultural subjects, such as the best crop rotations, inbreeding and crossbreeding as methods for the improvement of livestock, the use of lime to fertilize the soil, etc. The Societies were local in their aims and confined themselves mainly to improving seed and breed.

Through them, arrangements were made to distribute better seed and to breed better farm animals. Exhibitions of products were held at certain points throughout the country and prizes were given by the Societies for the best samples on display. Out of this arose the custom of having annual Fairs. (1)

One of the oldest of this type of organization was born as early as 1789, in King County, Nova Scotia, during the governmental term of Governor Parr. That same year an Agriculture Society was organized in Quebec to which the farmers as well as the clergy and nobility became subscribers. It was warmly patronized by Quebec's Governor, His Excellency Lord Dorchester. The province of New Brunswick organized its first Agriculture Society in 1790 under the patronage of Governor Carleton. In Ontario, with the assistance of Governor Simcoe, the first Agriculture Society was organized in 1791.

However, the progress of these Societies was disappointing to their organizers and friends. Often the Societies were short-lived because of lack of interest or funds. The habitual inertia of the farmers in Canada's first provinces was rooted

(1) R. L. Jones, "History of Agriculture in Ontario" P. 157.

deep. The gross ignorance of both theory and practice involved in agriculture was lamentable. The plowman was affected with a humbling sense of inferiority and the idea was widespread that a farmer, even though cultivating his own land, belonged to a degraded profession. [2]

The fostering of a general indignation to awaken the passion of farmers and elevate their thinking and action was not easy. It was not until the beginning of the nineteenth century, the time when newspapers began to spring up in North America in considerable numbers that a real start in promoting Agriculture Societies was made.

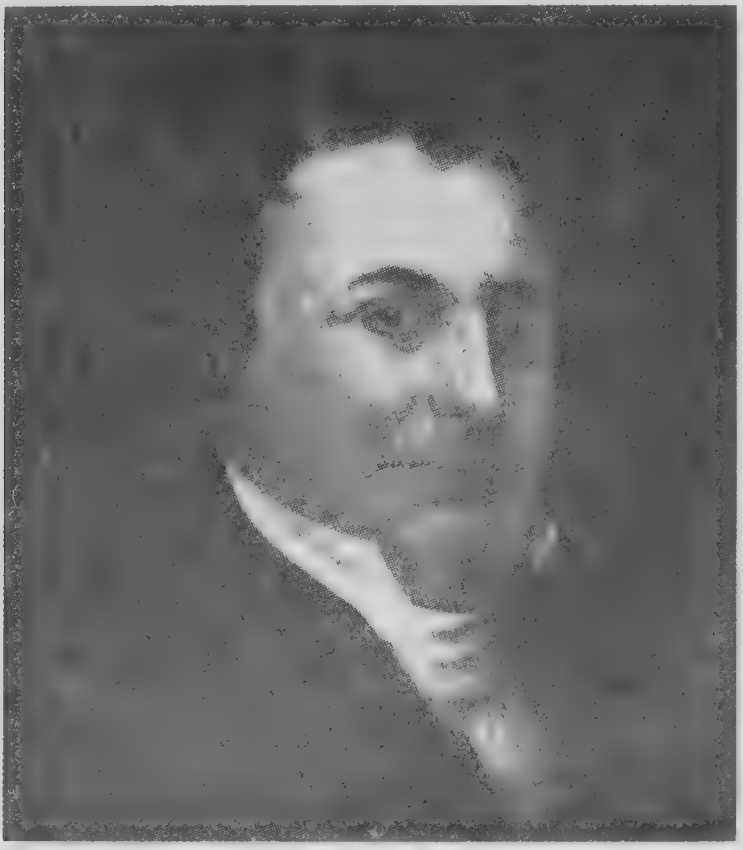
In 1818, John Young, a Sterlingshire Scotsman, published a series of thirty-eight letters over the signature, "Agricola", through which he aroused the interest not only of farmers but of many leading men of other professions, in the advancement of methods to improve the standing of agriculture. [3]

Landing at Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1814, Young had not been many years in this country before he noticed the different regard the people of Nova Scotia and those of Scotland had for the respectability of the farming profession. Apparently he came to the conclusion that he would do what lay in his power to lift the basic industry of his adopted country out of the degraded position into which it had fallen.

The organization of active Agriculture Societies, through which various scientific methods of improvements could be effected in a pioneer effort of adult education, was Young's objective. Almost overnight his words spelled action and throughout the length and breadth of the province Agriculture Societies were established, with a Central Board in Halifax on which he acted as Secretary-Treasurer. [4].His ability to arouse any degree of enthusiasm appears remarkable in view of the prevailing

(2) Howard Trueman, "Early Agriculture in the Atlantic Provinces" P. 2
(3) Howard Trueman, "Early Agriculture in the Atlantic Provinces" P. 5
(4) J. S. Martell, "The Achievements of Agricola and the Agriculture Societies 1818-25" — Bulletin of the Public Archives of Nova Scotia, Volume II, No. 2.

apathy and gloom in his home province. Young's way of encouraging the farmers was to urge upon them the value of education and co-operation. "The ignorant and unlettered boor is no more capable of being a successful farmer than is the team which he drives", was his contention.



JOHN YOUNG
"AGRICOLA"

Young could not have chosen a better time to spread his ideas. After the war of 1812 between Great Britain and the United States, dark days followed with failing markets and falling prices, sharpened in Nova Scotia by loss of crops. If his achievements were measured solely by the early enthusiasm he evoked, it could be said that his efforts met with unqualified success.

But the success of sick bed virtues depends largely on the duration of the illness. The depression was too short to make a lasting impression or to correct the farmers' faults. When prosperity returned they forgot past resolutions, and their enthusiasm for learning newfangled ideas for better farming spent itself quickly. Only the exceptional farmer appeared anxious to change the old system. The whole movement became a draggy affair which more or less had to be supported by provincial government grants to keep it alive.

Illustrations of the difficulties, encountered in those early days in getting the farmers to work together, appear in letters from some of the secretaries of Societies. One of them wrote: "I do not know what to make of our Society. We have a very few active people. The Highlanders are ignorant and lazy and the Yankees are conceited. There are one or two people of some influence who wish to hurt the Society from pique against myself". Another secretary must have been at his wits' end when he wrote: "I am heartily sick of being connected with a Society where some of the leading members on all occasions (except when their own pockets are benefitted) are disposed to annoy those who would wish to act with honour and integrity".

Agricola recognized the working out of these fundamental weaknesses in the farmers' behaviour when he expressed his fear in his 1823 annual report: "It would be fortunate for us if the lessons of adversity were continued a little longer, for I fear they will produce no adequate effect, because the resources of this country are so great and so wonderful that they may too soon relieve us from our difficulties." (5)

It may be well, however, to remember that movements may flicker out but they do not stop. In most cases they surrender their influence to other movements that spring up by their side or in their train.

(5) J. S. Martell, "The Achievements of Agricola and the Agriculture Societies 1818-25" — Bulletin of the Public Archives of Nova Scotia, Volume II, No. 2.

From the time when Upper and Lower Canada became united in 1840, a type of organization was launched by farmers from the Great Lakes east to the sea which was quite distinctive, both in form and in purpose, from the Agriculture Societies already in existence. This movement was known under the name of "Farmers' Clubs", or "The Leagues" as they were called in the Maritime Provinces. Ten to twenty farmers would meet together informally and form a Club. They elected officers and met periodically to discuss agricultural issues, to cultivate among their members a more extensive knowledge of the farming industry. They met to study questions which affected the social life and financial position of the farmers and to find means by which improvements could be brought about in their own sphere. It gave them a means of expression hitherto unknown.

Up to this time, the need to voice the views of farmers on public questions had not been nearly so pressing as it became later on. Until the third quarter of the last century, agriculture was by far the chief interest in the country and farmers were well represented in the provincial legislatures and the Dominion Parliament.

Thus far, the farming populace of the British North American provinces had been almost entirely dependent for their livelihood upon the products which nature supplied and upon goods of their own making, giving little heed to the industrial world without. Now the farmer suddenly awoke to find himself caught in an industrial network of which he had heretofore known nothing, and he was driven to relate the problems of agriculture, already asking for a solution, to all the other various phases of production.

Some of these Farmers' Clubs, especially in western Ontario, were most progressive in probing into questions concerning the farmers' interest in public affairs. Discussions and debates on agricultural issues were inaugurated and articles were read on topics of current interest. The Markham Farmers' Club was regarded as most efficient; it met regularly at two

o'clock in the afternoon on the first Saturday of each month. Occasionally, its sessions became protracted; adjournment was made for supper and its members gathered again to conduct their business in the evening hours. [6]

In Quebec the idea of the formation of agricultural Clubs did not take hold until 1869. A distinguished agriculturist, Mr. Ed. A. Bernard, noting the lamentable condition of agriculture in the province, recommended union and co-operation among the farmers. When the Roman Catholic clergy, who are invariably found in first place in any movement to advance the material and moral welfare of the population, gave their blessing to the creation of Farmers' Clubs, the extension of the Clubs progressed rapidly in that province. [7]

The main object of Farmers' Clubs was to encourage and maintain a deeper and more general interest in all questions pertaining to agriculture in the broadest sense by studying together how to best improve farm conditions. The Clubs stimulated farmers' ambitions to be successful in the truest sense and to use their own success to raise the calling of farmers to the place it should occupy in relationship to its importance within the nation. At the same time the Clubs afforded them an opportunity to become accustomed to debates and to develop talents in public speaking which otherwise might have remained dormant.

Club buying, in a co-operative way, was practiced in some cases among the members. Even political matters came under review at Club gatherings, and time after time comment was made upon the scarcity of farmer representatives in the legislative bodies of the province.

The influence of this early farm movement on the social and political life of the country was, of course, limited, as it was only a local combination of farmers and little intercourse occurred among these Clubs, apart from a sort of huddling to-

(6) L. A. Wood, "A History of Farmers' Movements in Canada" P. 17.
(7) J. B. Spencer, B.S.A., "The Agriculture Gazette of Canada 1915"

gether in certain areas. They remained more or less on a local plane, as no one seems to have thought of federating them and so making them the basis of a general farm organization.

It is easier to over-estimate the importance of the early farm organizations than to under-estimate them. Often the interest in agricultural improvement was confined to a handful of public-spirited men in each community. The great majority of farmers who had most need of instruction, had an unconquerable aversion to book-farming. The most that can be said for the early organizations is that they created a band of unity which no doubt became the starting point for a wider manifestation.

What may be considered as the first token farm movement in western Canada came into being in 1869, arising out of the grievances of the white settlers and the fear of the half-breeds, or Metis as they were called in French, who had settled on the Red River in the area where Winnipeg stands today. The discontent on the part of the Metis developed mainly out of fear that the newly proposed Canadian Homestead Laws would deprive them of the land which they had occupied so long under the Hudson's Bay Company's regime. (8)

The Hudson's Bay Company was organized in England for the purpose of entering the Canadian fur trade on a big scale in 1670. The Company obtained a Royal Charter giving it possession of all the land drained by rivers flowing into the Hudson Bay, as well as complete control of trade, passing of laws and maintenance of order. This vast domain, embracing all the territory from the Hudson Bay to the Rocky Mountains, became known as "Rupert's Land".

After Confederation in 1867, when it became clear that the Dominion of Canada had been firmly established, the Hudson's Bay Company, on November 19th, 1869, surrendered to Great Britain its rights over Rupert's Land. Until July 15th,

(8) H. G. L. Strange, "A Short History of Prairie Agriculture" P. 69.

1870, the date on which Great Britain transferred Rupert's Land to Canada, it became more or less a "no-man's land", as neither the Hudson's Bay Company nor Canada had any legal rights over the people in that area and Britain had failed to send any governing officials.

The population of the Red River area at that time consisted of 11,963 inhabitants, made up of 1,565 whites, mostly descendants of the early settlers brought there by Lord Selkirk in 1812 — 9,840 Metis, who regarded themselves as pioneers of French-Canadian settlement on the plains — and 558 Indians. Most of these people were settled on farms laid out along the Red and Assiniboine Rivers. However, the main occupation of the Metis and Indians was buffalo hunting.

When the Metis saw surveyors from eastern Canada at work even before the transfer took place, cutting across the boundaries of their farms, they feared that their land would be taken from them and that they would lose their language and their schools. They were exceedingly disturbed. What guarantees were to be given them as to their lands? In order to protect their interests they formed the "National Committee" and declared their unwillingness to be governed by Canada unless they received assurance from the government of Canada that their rights would be protected. John Bruce was elected president and Louis Riel secretary of the National Committee.

Louis Riel, a young half-breed with some ability and education, made up his mind to champion the cause of the underdog, his Metis people. He was a born orator. His character was predisposed to leadership. His talks made a great impression on the crowd. When he showed his followers how their sacred rights were being crushed underfoot by the invasion of their country from eastern Canada, they decided to resist.

When Governor-to-be William McDougall arrived in the West, even before the transfer of Rupert's Land from Britain to Canada was completed, he found his way to Fort Garry blocked by armed men. The settlement at the Red River was in the grip of a rebellion. The National Committee decided not to let any potential Governor enter the territory until their

demands were met. A provisional government, which included English settlers, was set up and the Red River settlement was declared independent. Louis Riel was elected as president of the Council. Riel pledged his allegiance to Queen Victoria and urged his followers to hold loyally to the Queen. (9)

LOUIS RIEL

Riel's leadership was taken seriously by the Metis, the English and the Canadian government in Ottawa. Unfortunately, one hot-headed opponent, Thomas Scott, foolhardily challenged Riel's authority and was tried by court martial for treason, found guilty and shot. Riel's government kept law and order in the settlement for ten months. Arrangements were then made to send a delegation of three influential men to Ottawa to present the settlement's wishes. Out of these negotiations came the agreement which resulted in the creation of Manitoba

(9) F. W. Anderson, "Patron and Rebel", Western Producer, July 7, 1955.

as a province with an elected government. On May 12, 1870, the Manitoba Act was passed in Canada's House of Commons. Riel's proposed "Bill of Rights" was the basis of the Manitoba Act which made Manitoba a full-fledged province of Canada, governed by a lieutenant-governor and a legislative assembly. It also recognized the right of the French-speaking settlers to their own language and schools. (10)

The following August an expeditionary force, under Colonel Garnet Wolseley, was sent by the Ottawa government to protect the province until a provincial government was established. Thus, out of the National Committee came the provisional government and out of this, in 1870 came the province of Manitoba with a provincially-elected government. Rupert's Land was renamed the "North West Territories", from which were formed, later on, the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta.

When in 1871 Manitoba was threatened by invasion from the United States of Irish Fenians under O'Donoghue, Governor Archibald asked the Metis to re-arm. Led by Riel, they captured the invading forces and turned them over to the custody of U.S. troops at Pembina. The Governor reviewed the Metis forces and publicly thanked them and Riel for their services. (11)

In February, 1874, Riel, who was living in the United States at the time, was elected Member of Parliament for Provencher by acclamation. Ontario became furious over Riel's election to Parliament, because Thomas Scott, the man shot by Riel's provisional government, was an Ontario-born man and a member of the Orange Lodge. Intense political dissension ensued in the East and the governmnt suggested that Riel should stay in the United States.

In 1875 a complete amnesty was proclaimed by the Canadian government to all involved in the uprising of 1870, excepting Riel and two of his aides. Riel was officially banished for a five-year period. This precipitated the end of what might be called the first political farm movement in western Canada.

(10) G. W. Brown, "Building the Canadian Nation", P. 332.
(11) H. G. L. Strange, "A History of Prairie Agriculture", P. 31.

CHAPTER 2

THE GRANGE OF THE PATRONS OF HUSBANDRY

1872 - 1914

In the meantime the farmers in eastern Canada expanded their efforts in organization to protect their interest. The Patrons of Husbandry, commonly known as "The Grange", was one of the best known and most attractive of the movements at that time. This movement was a "Secret Order", modelled more or less on the pattern of such societies as the Free Masons and Oddfellows, but confined exclusively to agriculturists. The name "Grange" was given to the Order as a whole, while the members were termed Patrons of Husbandry. It was unique in being the only Secret to which women were admitted. It was formed in the United States by J. Kelly, who was a clerk in the Federal Bureau of Agriculture in Washington.

In 1866 Kelly was commissioned by President Andrew Jackson to make a tour of the southern states in order to bring back information to the government with respect to agricultural and mineral resources. His observation of the wretched state of agriculture in the south, and the general bleakness of the farmers' social lot and their economic helplessness, drew him to form the opinion that only through collective action could the farmers improve their condition. Upon Kelly's return from the south, his idea of forming a Fraternal Order for farmers was discussed with his niece, Carrie Hill, and later with W. Sanders, W. M. Ireland and R. Thompson. On December 4, 1867, seven men met in Washington and established the national Grange.

Born of the same mother and cradled by the same environments, Canada and the United States have often been confronted with identical problems and have grown up to maturity

exhibiting a strong family resemblance in their thinking and action. That there was something wrong with the economic status of the Canadian farmer was demonstrated by the fact that many of them were accustomed to going into the employ of lumber camps, winter after winter, in order to eke out a bare existence for their families. As common problems have produced continuously and often unconsciously, parallel trends and movements, so did The Grange idea transplant itself from the U.S. to Canada.

This Secret Order entered eastern Canada as early as 1872. The first Grange was started in Quebec by Eben Thompson, who came from the U.S. in the role of torchbearer for the movement in Canada. Although the Quebec farmers were then entirely at the mercy of the produce buyers and commission men, Thompson encountered the rebuffs which are usually incidental to the expansion of new ideas among a doubting public. Unable to do more than start a few individual Granges in this province, he turned to Ontario where his ideas were more welcome. By spring of 1874, fifteen Granges had been organized in that province as branches of the American organization. This idea did not last very long. There were still United Empire Loyalists living in Ontario and these patriots, while they wanted a farm organization, did not want one that was a branch of an American organization. They wanted a Canadian organization, and consequently on June 2, 1874 a break was made with the American organization and the Dominion Grange was inaugurated. Squire W. Hill was elected as first Worthy Master and J. W. Dyas as secretary. The body became incorporated under a federal charter in 1877. (1)

The Province of Ontario, although not the birthplace of the Order in Canada, was always its stronghold. In the Maritime Provinces, Nova Scotia made the most rapid progress while New Brunswick came next. The movement did not penetrate to Prince Edward Island. More Granges were organized later in Quebec but never gained much of a stronghold in that province.

(1) H. Michell, "The Grange in Canada", P. 6

In western Canada the first Grange was formed in 1876 at High Bluff, Manitoba. As a number of new settlers coming from the East and the United States had had experience with, and had been members of The Grange, it became a fairly well recognized force in Manitoba. Only two Granges were started in what was at that time the North West Territories (comprising the area where Saskatchewan and Alberta are today) and two in British Columbia.

This movement was organized to combat the injustices of the nineteenth century. It offered to agriculturists an elaborate program of economic improvements and social betterments obtained through concerted organized action. The motto of the Order was: "In essentials, Unity; in unessentials, Liberty; in all things, Charity".

The preamble of The Grange constitution was a very interesting document which read in part as follows: "The soil is the source from whence we derive all that constitutes wealth; without it we would have no agriculture, no manufacturers, no commerce. Of all the material gifts of the Creator, the various products of the vegetable world are of the first importance".

Their ritual was simple and dignified in its teaching. The first degree was instructed that all honest labour is honourable, and that he must "drive the very plowshare of thought through the heavy soil of ignorance and thus prepare the mind for the growth of knowledge and wisdom." (2)

In their declaration of principles it was stated that instruction in the art and science of husbandry was to be the primary aim of The Grange, as the amount of products produced would be in proportion to the intelligence of the producer. Their main purpose was to develop a better and higher manhood and womanhood among themselves and to foster mutual understanding and co-operation. They proposed meeting together, talking together, working together, buying together, selling together

(2) H. Michell, "The Grange in Canada", P. 3.

and, in general acting together for their common protection and advancement as occasion might require.

To avoid the influences that had militated against the success of agriculture in the past, the Order opposed admission of non-agriculturists on the grounds that they had no direct interest in tilling the soil. They opposed the credit and mortgage system, the fashion system, high rates of interest, exorbitant profit in trade, excessive salaries, or any other factor that might precipitate bankruptcy of the producer. Dispensing with a surplus of middlemen, as their exactions diminish the profit of the producer, was one of the Order's main objectives.

The rise of The Grange from 1875 to 1879 was phenomenal. In 1879 the secretary of the Dominion Grange computed the membership of the Grange at over 31,000, organized in 51 Division Granges and 766 Subordinate Granges. About 650 were located in the province of Ontario, with a membership of approximately 26,000. Nova Scotia had about 60 Subordinate Granges by 1882, New Brunswick had 16, and Quebec 16. In Manitoba, 20 lodges had been organized and some of them flourished for several years. The four started farther west ran only a brief course. [3]

Although The Grangers stuck zealously to the fundamental concept of their Order to keep out of party politics, they openly criticized existing political conditions and continuously advocated measures of importance to the agricultural population.

Under their many legislative achievements come such items as the passing of the Ontario Noxious Weed Act in 1885, which provided that the township council must appoint a noxious weed inspector on the application of fifty ratepayers. In 1891 this Act was amended so that grain diseases were brought under the supervision of the township inspector, and anyone who knowingly sowed smut in his seed would be liable to a fine. It was The Grange that advanced the plan whereby farmers could secure money to underdrain their land, and that

(3) L. A. Wood, "A History of Farmers' Movements in Canada", P. 60-65.

succeeded in having the Tile Drainage Act passed as early as 1871. They brought about the gradual abolition of the marketing fees charged by town councils for the privilege to farmers of bringing their produce to market. They secured amendments to the assessment law exempting all livestock from municipal taxation. The standardization of salt and apple barrels and the imposition of penalties for light weight, and legislation making spark arrestors obligatory on all steam threshing engines, were all measures advanced and achieved by The Grange. (4)

After supporting the national policy of placing a high tariff wall around the Dominion to protect Canadian industry, inaugurated by the Conservative Government of Sir John A. Macdonald in 1879, The Grangers slowly began to realize the harmfulness of the custom tariff on the lot of the farmer, and by 1885 began to lead a fight against bonusing any industry at the expense of the country. They waged the most severe agitation against the 15 per cent custom and 5 per cent excise duty on coal oil coming in from the United States, at the time when the wax and the tallow candle disappeared in North America and petroleum became a necessity for illumination of lamps and lanterns on the farm. Because of their efforts this tax was first reduced to 7½ per cent and later to 2½ per cent. At that time five and one-half million gallons of coal oil were being imported annually into Canada. Another tax of 25 per cent on binder twine was protested vigorously and by 1898 twine was put on the free list. The Grange was also instrumental in forcing the reduction of tariff rates on agricultural implements from 35 per cent to 20 per cent in 1894.

Because The Grange was actually the first organization which made real attempts to unite Canadian primary producers, its influence over legislation was naturally limited but it was steady in its endeavour to improve conditions of the farming class. Perhaps it can be said that its character was of conservative nature but its effort in shaping public opinion was constant.

(4) L. A. Wood, "A History of Farmers' Movements in Canada", pp. 91-105.

In business, the Order's objective was to eliminate high profit and to oppose any tyranny of monopoly. To circumvent the credit system, co-operative purchasing was introduced by arranging for special rates to be given by manufacturers. This eventually led to the establishment of co-operative stores and the development of The Grange Wholesale Supply Company in Toronto in 1879. In 1883 the financial statement of this company showed a sales record of $237,000, and a dividend of 8 per cent was declared. The Grange Mutual Fire Insurance Company was organized as early as 1876, and by 1885 it had two branches with a total risk of over seven and a half million dollars; more than double the amount of any other purely mutual insurance company in Ontario. The Grange Trust Company was formed in 1878 with a nominal capital of $100,000, of which over $10,000 was paid up. The Ontario People's Salt Manufacturing Company was organized, to break the iron grasp of an alleged salt monopoly, and sold 270 cars of salt to farmers in 1885, reducing the price of coarse salt from one dollar to sixty cents a barrel. (5)

Unfortunately this expansion lacked the necessary consolidation in the education of the membership and eventually ran into various difficulties. Most of these worthy, farmer-owned co-operative establishments fell prey to untoward circumstances. Because by the very nature of their calling, farmers are more or less separated from each other, they of necessity plow lonely furrows which makes it difficult for them to co-operate. They are notorious for being self-opinionated and for having developed during the years a sense of individualism which often prevents them from establishing the proper relationship between themselves and their business.

In his book, "The Challenge of Agriculture", M. H. Staples used this expression: "The old saying that 'Farmers would not stick' had apparently again been demonstrated".

In combination with this inbred individualism came a series of mishaps in the co-operatve ventures, brought about

(5) L. A. Wood, "A History of Farmers' Movements in Canada", p. 81.

by mismanagement and misrepresentation, which had a disruptive influence on The Grange membership. The successive failures of The Grange Trust Company, the Fire Insurance Company and finally the Wholesale Supply Company dealt blows to The Grange from which it never quite recovered. [6]

Although these institutions had demonstrated that this kind of business could be conducted successfully on a co-operative basis, if farmers could be taught to understand co-operative principles, their history also proved that no co-operative could survive dissension, strife, treachery and disloyalty within its ranks.

High officials connected with these commercial organizations, through alleged involvement in what may be called corruption, did more to wreck The Grange than did any other factor. The scandal brought about by a western colonization scheme, engineered and promoted partly by high officials of The Grange, which ended in a series of lawsuits and controversies starting in 1886 and finishing in the House of Commons in 1891, brought discredit to the Order. In the court proceedings it was made plain that the promoters had been guilty of flagrant misrepresentation. The expose of this alleged practice through front page newspaper articles intimated that certain persons had profited richly by the enterprise. This created mistrust among the membership and hastened the decline of The Grange. [7]

A few self-seeking men, seeing an opportunity for making money out of the Order, did more than any other element to wreck The Grange. Mistrust and suspicion spread. The whole organization became rent with contending factions, each hurling open insinuations and accusations at the other. This period of Grange history forms the most discreditable phase of the whole movement. It was a source of the greatest grief to the true-hearted men who tried to guide the Order through this difficult period and who carried on their work almost unrecognized and

(6) H. Michell, "The Grange in Canada", p. 18.
(7) L. A. Wood, "A History of Farmers' Movements in Canada", p. 90.

unappreciated. Indeed the wonder is that this little band of faithful men were able to keep the Order alive for as many years as they did in the face of such tremendous odds. [8]

The Order's association with business brought about another factor responsible for its eventual downfall. It distracted and antiquated the officials' thinking, and threw it out of line with the agricultural viewpoint on the leading issues of the time the Order sought to serve. This provokes the observation that the organization, because of this condition, failed to attract young men in any appreciable numbers. Consequently unable to keep step with the rising demand for more aggressive leadership and action, The Grange slowly lost its grip on the community. The fact that it was a secret organization, a ritual in itself, was another drawback and aroused objections in some quarters. [9]

In the Maritime Provinces no Granges were started after 1889, and the Order completely collapsed in this section of the country before the turn of the century. In the West it had died completely by 1909. In Ontario, even amalgamation with the Farmers' Association of Ontario in 1907 and the infusion of fresh blood, could not save The Grange from its inevitable fate, but it lingered on in that province until 1914.

Nevertheless, no cause for which men of high ideals strive unselfishly can ever be a complete loss. With men like Jabel Robertson, Henry Glendenning, Wm. Blair and W. L. Smith in its ranks, The Grange must have been a force in the land. With all its mistakes and disasters, this organization left its mark. It set the Canadian farmers thinking, got them together for the first time, and gave them a sense of common interest.

Credit is given to The Grange as the basic farmers' organization in Canada — the tap root from which all other movements have subsequently developed. And it did not rise up from barren ground, with no depth of earth. Its roots, thrust-

(8) H. Michell, "The Grange in Canada", p. 18.
(9) M. H. Staples, "The Challenge of Agriculture", p. 19.

ing vigorously downward, drew bountifully from mother earth and formed a store of ideals and experiences which were sure to have an influence on the events that were to follow.

Historical movements, of whatever kind, generally produce intellectual guidance that brings about a change of attitude, either spiritual or mental or both, which by its very nature supplies the basis for further growth. All it requires is rich, warm soil wherein to germinate. From the beginning farmers' organizations have found their lodgment in fertile soil, but periodically certain exploitive agencies have made desperate attempts to defile that good earth. They have used and misused the good-natured "man of the soil" until his patience has reached the breaking point. In his first brave attempt at organization, the farmer did much to throw off the yoke of oppression, but his efforts were temporarily halted by the loss of The Grange.

CHAPTER 3

MANITOBA AND NORTH WEST FARMERS' UNION

1883 - 1886

Meanwhile, in the land beyond the Great Lakes, a new organization sprang up. As more new settlers swarmed into the West, new troubles developed. The Metis complaind bitterly against the land survey and the illegal seizure of some of their land by new settlers. While the Metis were complaining, the white settlers, too, were seething with discontent over injustices they suffered.

Inspired by the American Farmers' Alliance, which expanded rapidly across the border at the time, western farmers proceeded in 1883 to organize under the name of the "Manitoba and North West Farmers' Union." Dr. Fleming of Brandon was elected first president and George Purvis, secretary.

One of the main causes of discontent was increased freight rates. Prior to 1881 the Government of Canada had constructed certain railway lines in Manitoba, and on these lines the class rates charged were approximately those of the "winter" rates in eastern Canada of the Grand Trunk Railway.

When in 1881 the Canadian Pacific syndicate took over the Manitoba lines and commenced to extend the Canadian Pacific Railway through the prairies to British Columbia, the Company, on request, received permission from the Government to increase the Manitoba rates by an average of 59% and to extend them on this high basis as the line was constructed westward. (1)

In addition, the Dominion Government had by contract granted the Canadian Pacific Railway a monopoly of railroad

(1) Board of Transport Commissioners for Canada, "Equalization Case", April 7, 1955.

transportation to the North-West for twenty years. When the Manitoba Government chartered a railroad to run to the border to connect with the United States lines to the east, the Federal Government promptly disallowed this act on the grounds that it violated the spirit of the Canadian Pacific charter.

National policy may have justified such a concession as the price of ensuring the building of an all-Canadian transportation line, but it gave the Canadian Pacific Railway a whip over the North-West, an advantage which the railroad ruthlessly exploited. Protests of critics, or pleas for redress, were too often answered with threats and punitive action.

The tariff offered a further cause for discontent. The proposed increase in duty on agricultural implements, from 25 to 35 per cent, caused widespread outcry and condemnation. Living in a pioneer community, western people had to buy many of their necessities from the outside. If they purchased American goods, the tariff increased the cost greatly. If they purchased Canadian products to escape the tax, they had to bring them from eastern Canada and pay transportation charges imposed by the C.P.R. It is no wonder that many Manitobans were deeply embittered against the railway company. (2)

Another complaint was directed against the elevator and grain buyers. These interests had established a monopoly situation. There were no standard grades or government inspections to protect the producers. The result was undergrading, overdocking, mixing, exorbitant charges and commissions. It was a merciless, exploitive system.

These grievances filled the minds of the people living in Manitoba and the North West Territories. On December 20th, 1883, at the first Convention in Brandon, the Manitoba and North West Farmers' Union drew up a "Declaration of Rights" which was worded as follows:

"We hopefully have faced the hardships of isolation and of vigorous climate and have been and are still willing to contend manfully with the natural disadvantages of our new loca-

(2) D. F. Warner, "Agriculture History", Volume 23, Number 1, p.16.

tion. Now, however, that we have for the first time a surplus of grain, we have discovered that prices we obtain are not sufficient to cover the cost of production and that we are face to face with the fact that, notwithstanding our labour and outlay, we can barely subsist." (3)

The Union, not exclusively agrarian in membership, commanded the support of practically the entire population of Manitoba. Here was a potent force and one which no politician could afford to ignore. John Norquay, first Premier of Manitoba, moved with alacrity to ally his government with the Union. Both the Union and the provincial government sent missions to Ottawa where they presented their demands to Sir John A. Macdonald, the Conservative Prime Minister. Macdonald was non-committal in reply. He strongly implied that he had no intention of rescinding the railroad monopoly or giving consideration to a lower tariff. The Manitoba delegation had to return empty-handed from the first of what proved to be a series of hegiras to the capital. (4)

Petition after petition was sent to Ottawa by the Farmers' Union, asking for redress of their grievances, which consisted mainly of protests against excessive freight charges and oppressive high tariffs on agricultural implements and building materials. They asked that the provincial government have the right to charter railways anywhere in Manitoba; for absolute control of public lands, including schools, by the Legislature of the Province; for the construction of the Hudson Bay Railway to shorten the route to the world market for western wheat; and for the right of representation in the Dominion Cabinet. The government did not even acknowledge most of the Union's communications and did nothing to alleviate existing hardships.

Similar treatment was accorded to the Metis with regard to their grievances. After 1870 many of the Metis made their homes in the Saskatchewan valley, tracking down the disappearing buffalo herds. As settlement moved west, they feared again that they would lose their lands. The "Land Surveys", in large

(3) H. G. L. Strange, "Short History of Prairie Agriculture", p. 70.
(4) D. F. Warner, "Agriculture History", Volume 1, Number 1, p. 118.

part responsible for the rebellion of 1867-70, proved troublesome again. The officials who were entrusted with this survey work were not only hostile to the claims of the half-breeds, but in many cases were prejudiced against them as a class. Again and again the Metis requested the government in Ottawa to consider their claims to land and grant them titles to their farms, but their pleas were ignored. (5)

This infuriated both settlers and Metis. By 1885, it is recorded, the revolt against the policies of the Dominion Government was general in Manitoba. Extremists of the Farmers' Union were in favor of declaring the independence of Manitoba. A resolution to this effect was passed at their convention, but was later rescinded. Some radicals sketched a scheme for the entrance of the region into the United States, as a State. Some of them, it is reported, even contemplated armed revolt. (6)

There were complications: The buffalo, which constituted the main livelihood of the Indians, were rapidly disappearing. Further, being short of cash, the government reduced to the Indians the rations which had been apportioned to them when they were placed on reserves. The Indians began to brood over their lost freedom, and discontent began to rise among them. Still the government gave no heed to the warnings of the Mounted Police or the Indian Agents. (7)

In 1884 a delegation was sent by the Metis from the North West Territories to Louis Riel in the United States, asking him to come back to head the movement for the purpose of securing the attention of the Dominion Government. Riel hesitated, but finally accepted. At the outset he adopted moderate measures and urged constitutional means for the redress of Metis grievances. A "Bill of Rights" for the half-breeds was adopted and sent to Ottawa. For nearly a year after Riel's return to the country, petitions were sent to Ottawa and representations made at different times, without avail.

It appeared as if their demands, reasonable in some re-

(5) Alexander Begg, "History of the North West", p. 182.
(6) H. G. L. Strange, "Short History of Prairie Agriculture", p. 71.
(7) G. W. Brown, "Building the Canadian Nation", p. 337.

spects, were being treated with contempt. That such representations relating to the conditions of the North-West were forwarded to Ottawa and remained unheeded, has been fully proven. This was a great error on the part of the government. [8]

The authorities either did not realize the gravity of the situation, or did not believe in the truth of the representations made to them. That eventually justice would have been done we cannot but believe, but the fact remains that the delay was the cause for the outbreak of the Riel Rebellion on March 26, 1885.

Embued with a desire to help his people, Riel's revolutionary instinct unbalanced his judgment. With a desire to redress the wrongs of the Metis, which it seemed could not be achieved by lawful means although they had waited for fifteen painful years, Riel induced them to take up arms in support of their rights. A detachment of police was attacked and defeated by the Metis. Ottawa became alarmed and the government dispatched troops under General Middleton. Middleton's advance forces were fought to a draw at Duck Lake, but his main forces defeated the Metis in a four-day battle. Riel surrendered and was tried in Regina for high treason and found guilty, with a recommendation for mercy. He was hanged on November 10, 1885 and buried in the grounds of the Cathedral in St. Boniface, Manitoba. [9]

Sir Wilfred Laurier, speaking on the North West Rebellion in the House of Commons at the time, described Riel and his actions as follows: "Nature had endowed him with many brilliant qualities but nature had denied him that supreme quality without which all other qualities, however brilliant, are of no avail. Nature had denied him a well-balanced mind."

Although this uprising was confined to Metis and Indians and had no connection with the Farmers' Union, the interests which opposed and feared the farm organization knew opportunity when they heard it knock. They promptly cried out that

(8) Alexander Begg, "History of the North West", p. 190.
(9) H. G. L. Strange, "Short History of Prairie Agriculture", p. 32.

the Union had amply demonstrated its disloyalty in the past and obviously must have been behind this revolt.

It is true, of course, that at the commencement of the agitation, and even up to the eve of the affair at Duck Lake, Riel had the support of the white settlers of the district, but the accusation against the Farmers' Union was unjust. The leaders of the Union hotly denied the charge, but it was no use. The taint of disloyalty had so poisoned the minds of many Canadians against the farm organization that they were convinced it had indeed instigated the revolt.

Excepting the fact that the Farmers' Union was not directly involved in the outbreak and excluding the dramatic conclusion of this pathetic rebellion, the Union's apparent readiness to resort to secession brought disrepute upon the movement. When, at its annual convention in 1885 it passed a resolution advising against immigration into the West until the farmers' grievances had been remedied, the organization was tried and condemned by public opinion. Thus came to an end this attempt of prairie farmers to organize themselves in self-defence against poverty, distress and wretchedness in their grim struggle for the needs of body and soul. The Manitoba and North West Farmers' Union became defunct by 1886.

Louis Aubrey Wood, on page 124 of his book, "A History of Farmers' Movements in Canada", gives another reason for this Union's downfall. He claims that among those who had taken an interest in Union activities were Clifford Sifton of Brandon and Rev. J. M. Douglas of Morris, both good active Liberal supporters. Therefore the opinion grew that the Union was acting as an arm of the Liberal Party in its attack on the Conservative Dominion Government.

What numerical strength in membership this organization attained seems to be unknown. All we can learn today is that 300 delegates attended its 1885 Convention and that in its dying days it amalgamated with the Manitoba Rights League.

If immediate and significant results are the criteria of success, then the Manitoba and North West Farmers' Union

failed. Such judgment, however, would be inconclusive and unfair. Even though the Union died an untimely death, western farmers went on to fight for the rights it had taught them to seek. It is well to remember that all their demands, without exception, are today accomplished facts. The Union deserves a share of the credit.

Even the unfortunate civil war, deplorable as it was, was not a total loss. The government quickly agreed to deal with the question of land claims for the Metis. A Commission to investigate the claims of North-West half-breeds was appointed on the 30th of March, 1885. Under its instructions, the Commission was given plenary power to deal with every question affecting the claims of the half-breeds in the most liberal spirit and to exercise its discretion in adjusting the claims presented. It is a matter of unavailing regret that this Commission had not been appointed a few weeks sooner.

The idea of summer-fallowing also came, quite accidentally, out of this lamentable revolution. When farmers from the Indian Head area of Saskatchewan went off to serve in putting down the uprising, they were unable to seed a crop for one year. The next year they discovered that they got twice as good a crop. This promoted the establishment of this cultural practice which has since put millions of additional dollars into the pockets of Canadian farmers.

Another matter of importance arose out of this "family quarrel"; it attracted the attention of the world to the Canadian North West. The country became known in quarters where it had until then been only a name. Great benefits accruel from the increased interest which was manifested towards Canada, which has filled up our vacant spaces and extended our trade and industries. (11)

The most important factor is that it provided a challenge to the Canadian effort to build a nation from sea to sea on a more equal basis. (12)

(10) Alexander Begg, "History of the North West", p. 164.
(11) Alexander Begg, "History of the North West", p. 133.
(12) G. W. Brown, "Building the Canadian Nation", p. 337.

CHAPTER 4

THE PATRONS OF INDUSTRY

1889 - 1902

The Patrons of Industry became active in co-operative enterprises and politics, both in eastern and western Canada, during the latter part of the past century. This Secret Order, with a rule of signs and grips and password, entered Canada from the United States where it originated in 1887. The founders were Rev. R. W. Vertican, Dr. A. Campbell and F. N. Krauss. It was a politic-economic association and launched the Populist Party in the U.S.A. during the period from 1890-96.

The Order of the Patrons of Industry operated much on the same lines as The Grange, but it encouraged political action while The Grange had carefully avoided politics. Many Canadian farmers at the time believed that as producers they were being poorly represented by the professional politicians and they developed a desire for independent political action. This yearning of Canadian farmers for a political party of their own, through which they could achieve their aims, had for some time existed in their subconscious and therefore they were just as eager as were their American counterparts to receive political instructions through The Patrons of Industry.

The first Local Lodge in Canada was started at Sarnia, Ontario, in 1889 by Norman Smith who had been sent to Canada as an organizer from the United States. Smith was a convincing speaker and had no difficulty in enrolling farmers in the Lodges, so that the Order grew like a mushroom. At the beginning of 1891 steps were accordingly taken to hold an assembly to elect a governing body. Furgas Kennedy was elected first president and C. A. Welsh, secretary. A special platform committee was selected for the purpose of considering the various points on which to draft a national political plat-

form. Such a platform was adopted at London, Ontario on September 22nd, 1891, and the organization took part in the federal election held in the same year. The platform can be summarized under the following headings:—

Tariff for revenue only; reciprocal trade between Canada and other countries; prohibition of bonusing railways by government grants; rigid economy in governments; simplification of the laws and reduction in the machinery of governments; abolition of the Canadian Senate; effective legislation to protect labour and its products from combinations and monopolies that enhance prices; reservation of public lands for settlers; etcetera.

The movement swept forward at such a pace that when the annual meeting of the Grand Association of Ontario and Quebec was convened in Victoria Hall, Toronto, in 1892, a paid-up membership of 30,000 was reported, distributed among 1,400 lodges. (1) In 1894 Quebec set up a provincial Grand Association of its own. The farmers of the Maritime Provinces, encouraged by the idea of independent political action through a third party, established strong organizations in these provinces.

This Order spread to the Canadian West in the fall of 1891. The first sub-association was organized on the Portage plains. Charles Braithwaite became the first Grand Master in Manitoba. He was a romantic figure, masterful and shrewd. At the annual meeting in Brandon in 1892, it was stated that 100 sub-associations were in existence in the West, of which a few had been formed in the North West Territories.

Besides Braithwaite, there was another stalwart in the western patrons — John Forsythe, of Neepawa, who for a period was vice-president. The story is told that Forsythe, desirous of reaching a convention at Brandon where he was billed to speak, drove across the country through a raging blizzard with his lower limbs swathed in gunny sacks. He delivered his speech with accustomed vigour only to find, upon later examination, that he had been standing with both feet frozen.

(1) L. A. Wood, "A History of Farmers' Movements in Canada'., p. 115.

Realizing that there has always been something convincing about "cold print", a journal, "The Canada Farmers' Sun" was established in London, Ontario in 1891. In the West a paper, "Patrons' Advocate" was published at Rapid City, Manitoba. The Canada Farmers' Sun was moved to Toronto in 1893; it had a long period of usefulness and became the guiding star of successive farm organizations.

By 1895 the Patrons of Industry had established 330 Lodges with a membership of 5000 in the West. The membership of Ontario and Quebec was computed at 50,000 that year. The movement expanded rapidly through Canada and although its lifetime was comparatively short, it became one of the most colourful of Canadian farm organizations.

Its aim was to protect farmers and workers against the exploiting power of commercial and financial interests. Members demanded lower custom-tariffs, a railway to the Hudson Bay, grain elevators and flour mills at suitable localities to be owned and operated by farmers; that banks should make available loans at 5% and that the farmers should be represented on the government board which fixed grain standards. Two members of the Patrons of Industry were later appointed to that board.

With regard to tariffs the government had an appraisal of the attitude of the Patrons back in 1891 when a petition with 25,000 signatures was sent in, asking that binder twine, salt and iron be put on the free list. This was followed by a further petition during the session of 1892-3, signed by 40,000 Patrons to the effect that the removal of the duties on agricultural implements, coal, oil, wire fencing and corn was keenly desired by Canadian farmers.

In provincial politics in the West the Patrons came out in favour of the enfranchisement of women; the prohibition of liquor traffic, and indicated an uncompromising opposition to the restoration of the separate school system in Manitoba. They demanded the ballot box for the West and declared themselves absolutely against the acceptance of a railway pass by any member of a legislative body. How seriously they took the

matter of free railway passes was proven when John Forsythe was stripped of his rank in the Order for accepting and riding on a free railway pass after he had been elected a Member of the Legislative Assembly.

In the economic field the Order endeavoured to checkmate monopolies and combines that were known to be growing up on Canadian soil, by organizing commercial enterprises such as the Farmers' Binder Twine and Agricultural Implement Manufacturing Company in Brantford, Ontario in 1892. The Company immediately influenced the binder twine market and prices began to recede. By 1894 the Patrons' organization was able to supply its members with twine at 6½ cents per pound, and paid an annual dividend of ten percent. (2)

In Western Canada a grain elevator in Boissevain was acquired and a co-operative store for mail order business was opened at Portage la Prairie. It was known as the Patron's Commercial Union and later changed its name to the Farmers' Trading Company. In 1894 it handled 500,000 pounds of binder twine at the remarkably low price of 7¼ cents a pound, on credit.

Besides these commercial activities, the Patrons kept the political pot constantly boiling. They continuously meddled in provincial and federal politics, with varying success or failure. In 1894 they really entered the vexing labyrinth of politics in full force when they threw themselves into the Ontario provincial election. Their attempt was unexpectedly successful in electing a considerable number of members as a third party.

Following the pre-election pledges of his party, J. L. Haycock, who had become party leader, introduced a Bill in the 1895 session against the acceptance of a pass from a railway company by a Member of the Legislative Assembly. But he could persuade neither the government nor the Conservatives to support it. The Premier said that the giving of passes was a matter of courtesy on the part of the railways, and that he could not conceive of any valid reason why members receiving them should be tied to the cause of these corporations.

(2) L. A. Wood, "History of Farmers' Movements in Canada", p. 119.

Mr. Haycock's most notable parliamentary effort was his attempt to convince the House that the keeping up of the official residence of the Lieutenant-Governor in Toronto and the other bombastic activities accompanying it were a needless expense. In an eloquent address he described how, having abstained from making use of a formal invitation to attend the Lieutenant-Governor's banquet, he had walked by Government House together with a friend on the evening of the brilliant affair. "Lights flashed from its windows and wondrous music wafted through the air. Entranced with those beautiful sounds and those wonderful sights, we stood there," he told the House impressively. "When we left and passed around the corner, an old grey-headed man, bent with years, stopped us and said, 'I am hungry.' How much more sensible would it be," cried the Patrons' leader, "If we would spend the provinces' money providing homes for such old men in indigent circumstances, rather than lavishing it upon the splendid residences and meaningless functions of the Crown's representatives."

Nevertheless, save for the above-mentioned efforts on not too important issues, the Patron groups allowed the subjects discussed at the election to fade from their minds. They did little more than engage in sniping operations. The government's readiness to investigate any matter in which the Patron members were interested seemed always enough to cool their zeal. They were even accused by the Conservatives (the official opposition) of sitting dumb. Summing it up, the Patrons made a poor showing in the legislature, and their doom was sealed before the election of 1898, when only one of them was re-elected. [3]

The greatest setback of all was sustained when L. A. Welsh, secretary of the Patrons, in a published speech, denounced the leaders for their alleged action of lining up with the Liberals. This served to pile more fuel on the fire of existing suspicion. Another controversial element was the Manitoba School issue on which the Order was forced to take a stand and decided against the separate school system in that province. The

(3) L. A. Wood, "A History of Farmers' Movements in Canada", p. 141

large number of Roman Catholics in its ranks meant that a split became imminent.

Thus, the farmers venture into politics resulted in attacks from within, which shattered the prestige of the Order. The lamentable failure of the organization in the 1898 federal election proved disastrous for the Patrons and after this the Order slowly withered away until it had virtually disappeared by 1902. Only the Farmers' Trading Company, a symbol of their efforts, remained in business, until 1912.

Even the lure of commercial success turned out to be an expensive dream for the Patrons of Industry. Their experience in business, like that of The Grange, was not a happy one. When some of the chief officers began to use the organization for selfish ends, away went the whole thing. (4)

Nevertheless, outstanding personalities in the organization such as C. Mallory, T. O. Curry, J. L. Wilson and J. L. Haycock, had sown good seed. For the first time the traditional two-party system had been challenged by people voting other than Conservative or Liberal. Never since, have partisan politics regained the hold they once had on the masses of the people.

Outside of the various values of adult education, resulting in more independent thinking at the ballot box and a somewhat deeper understanding of the co-operative movement, the Patrons of Industry did not record too many achievements. Its lifetime was too short. It was chopped down in the bloom of life by the treacherous axe of politics.

But the movement had challenged and made its protest against existing economic conditions which denied the farmer any control over his products, which allowed selfish interests to interpose themselves between him and his markets and to exact a toll quite out of proportion to any services rendered.

The Patrons of Industry left behind a tradition that made an impression on the Canadian farm population from coast to

(4) Hopkins Moorhouse, "Deep Furrows", p. 47

coast. The way to progress became more clearly marked, and the course to be taken by farm organizations, in order to reach their goal, became more plainly defined.

Note may be made at this point, of the fact that about the same time as the Patrons of Industry entered the West, another organization worthy of passing notice — the "Farmers' Alliance" — crossed from the north central United States and gained a brief foothold in the province of Manitoba. The area immediately north of Winnipeg became headquarters.

Its members urged the destruction of unjust combines and stressed the value of co-operation. They maintained that co-operation, properly understood and properly applied, would place a limit on the encroachment of organized monopoly, and would be the means by which the mortgage-burdened farmers could assert their freedom from the tyranny of organized capital, and obtain the reward for honesty, industry and frugality which they so richly deserved and which they were unjustly denied.

This organization arose in the United States at the beginning of the eighties, just as The Grange started to decline. Those vested interests that were disturbed by The Grange uprising, and relieved by its decline, were rudely shocked by what happened when this new movement started to spread. It became the farmers' vehicle for an organized attack on economic and political problems and developed into the largest farmers' organization in the world, its membership at its height probably being three times as great as that ever attained by The Grange. (5)

However, this organization had no success in entrenching itself in Canada. A number of sub-lodges were formed in Manitoba, but because the Patrons were organizing at the same time, the Farmers' Alliance never made much headway. The membership reached a maximum of about five hundred. At a meeting held in Winnipeg in 1892, leaders of the Alliance contemplated fusion with the Patrons of Industry, but before this was accomplished the Alliance movement disappeared. (6)

(5) C. C. Taylor, "The Farmers' Movement in America" — 1620-1920, p. 194.
(6) L. A. Wood, "A History of Farmers' Movements in Canada", p. 124.

During three turbulent decades, pioneer prairie farmers thus groped with little success for an effective means of obtaining action through organization. It may be regarded as the training period during which they were learning their lessons in the harsh school of experience.

CHAPTER 5

THE FARMERS' ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

1902 - 1907

During the years from 1895 to 1901 farmers' movements in Canada descended to a low ebb. In Ontario the Order of the Patrons of Industry was crumbling away while The Grange was barely holding its own. In Quebec and the Maritime Provinces, both The Grange and the Patron's movements had vanished forever.

However, through the gallant efforts of Dr. Goldwin Smith, an ever-ready and ever-faithful friend of the Canadian farmers, who came to the rescue of the Patrons' official organ, the "Canada Farmers' Sun," at Toronto, fresh courage was infused into the dispirited and disorganized farmers of Ontario. Smith assumed financial control of the paper and changed its name to "Weekly Sun." In the spring of 1902 he invited readers to express their views as to what type of movement would be most suitable to meet the needs of the hour. In the fall of the same years, on invitation of the "Sun", 150 farmers assembled in the Temple Building, Toronto, and formed the Farmers' Association of Ontario, with C. A. Mallory as its first president, and W. L. Smith as secretary.

This organization, although ready to bring its influence to bear on Canadian political life to secure and promote the interests of farmers in matters of legislation, resolved to stay away from partisan politics.

In accordance with this resolution the Farmers' Association of Ontario immediately gave attention to a series of transportation problems, especially with regard to farmers' losses through having their cattle killed or injured along the railways. As freight rates on short hauls were exorbitant, a deputation was

sent to Ottawa in 1903 with the request that the government establish a railway commission for the Dominion, as well as other legislation affecting the railways.

The government appointed a commission to investigate the whole subject of transportation. At the following session of Parliament a comprehensive Railway Bill was passed which provided for the establishment of a Board of Railway Commissioners with the authority to set rates charged by railways. It also included the request of the Farmers' Association, that responsibility for animals killed or injured on railway property should become the responsibility of the railways. This resulted in the fencing of railway property, which has been in effect ever since.

In the provincial field the Farmers' Association asked the Ontario Government to control the rates charged by electric power companies. In 1906 the Ontario government established a permanent Hydro-electric Power Commission which implemented the transmission of power to municipalities from the publicly-owned hydro at Niagara Falls and carried out other improvements suggested by the Association. At the same time, the Association asked for government ownership of public utilities and raised its voice against the system of granting bounties to manufacturers of iron and steel and other industries. It also proposed that the government should take royalties on minerals extracted in the province. About one-half of the Association's demands received some attention during the ensuing few years. (1)

In spite of its aggressiveness on many public issues and its influence in molding public opinion, the Farmers' Association of Ontario did not become strong in a numerical sense and its life span was short. But it performed a useful service during the period of its existence. For one thing, it stirred into greater activity on questions of public policy, The Grange, which had become practically dormant or was confining its work mostly to social and commercial lines.

As The Grange had not yet fallen by the wayside but had been doddling along, asking for almost the same things,

(1) L. A. Wood, "A History of Farmers' Movements in Canada", p. 153.

there appeared to be a wasteful parallel effort. There were two organizations in the province serving the same purpose. At the Farmers' Association annual convention of 1905, Grange officials advanced suggestions that the two organizations should unite. When the Association assembled in 1907 it decided to accept the overtures of The Grange and plans to merge were eventually effected.

Much was expected from this amalgamation, but it did not have the desired reviving effect on the farmers. The new organization adopted the charter and the name of the old organization — The Grange — which did not arouse the imagination of the farmers. It was something old with a sting of failure attached. But it brought to the attention of the public, such men as E. C. Drury, J. J. Morrison and others of outstanding ability.

It was this organization that for the first time established connections with the grain growers movement in the West in the hope of forming a closer tie between eastern and western farmers. Working in co-operation with existing western organizations by joining the Canadian Council of Agriculture in 1909, its work was not spectacular perhaps, but it was quite effective up to 1914 when The Grange was re-organized into the United Farmers of Ontario.

About the time when The Grange and the Farmers' Association of Ontario were trying to effect amalgmation, the principle of a new organization was introduced in the West. The American Society of Equity, founded by J. A. Everitt, in the State of Indiana, was brought to the attention of farmers in the western part of the North West Territories (the area which later became the Province of Alberta), through the efforts of J. W. Keen, Turnip Lake. Rapid progress was made in spreading the organization by starting a number of locals in the Edmonton area. The Canadian Society of Equity was formed in 1905. The word "equity" had a special significance to farmers and through the years they clung with a death grip to the term.

The aim of the Society of Equity was to educate the farmers in methods of controlling marketing to obtain prices

equal to the cost of production. The elimination of protective tariff walls to reduce cost of production was their main objective. In December 1905, officers of the Society presented a brief to this effect to the federal tariff commission sitting in Edmonton.

In line with its doctrine of keeping cost down, it launched a number of co-operative enterprises including a company for the development of a timber limit, but this venture came to grief two years later. When eventually the whole undertaking collapsed, it had a detrimental effect on the Society's progress. It supplied, however, experience and leadership in Alberta and it remained fairly active until 1909.

CHAPTER 6

GRAIN GROWERS ASSOCIATION

1901 - 1917

With organizations continuously overlapping each other, it will be necessary at this point to go back to the turn of the century and follow the rise of a major grassroot farm movement of striking importance in the North West Territories (in the area which later became the province of Saskatchewan). It was formed as a result of an indignation meeting called by W. R. Motherwell and Peter Dayman, on December 18th, 1901, in the little prairie town of Indian Head.

By 1900 wheat growing in Western Canada had reached 60,000,000 bushels. Railways and elevators were unable to cope with more than a fraction of this amount. Farmers could not get box cars in which to ship their own grain and were forced to put it through elevators where some unscrupulous grain buyers, taking advantage of the wheat blockade, cheated the farmers on grade and price. Excessive dockage, short weights, depressed prices constituted a vicious three-ring circus.

The farmers were aware of the fact that because of an agreement between railways and elevator companies, they were unable to get sufficient railroad cars when needed and they had no alternative but to ship their grain through, or sell their crops to the elevator companies which had succeeded in creating monopolistic conditions. Elevators were filled, and day after day farmers hauled their grain over the rough prairie trails, stood on the street beside the wagon all day long, and then hauled their grain home again at night because they could not deliver it. Bitterness and resentment smoldered as the season wore on. Expressions of indignation were voiced with rising intensity. [1]

(1) H. S. Patton, Ph. D. — "Grain Growers Co-operation in Western Canada", p. 18.

This was the problem discussed at the Indian Head meeting. As the discussion expanded, feelings ran high. Farmer after farmer got to his feet to tell of his own grim personal experiences. Finally the conclusion was reached that to secure a remedy farmers must organize along strong, sane lines in an organization that could speak for all western farmers and

W. R. MOTHERWELL

press persistently and insistently for improvement of grain marketing conditions. The "Territorial Grain Growers Association" was organizd, with Motherwell, the primary mover, elected as first president and John Miller as secretary.

Under honest, hard-working Motherwell this new organization made rapid progress. In less than two months it had established more than thirty-eight branches with 500 members. No longer was the grain grower prepared to allow the selfish

interests of the private enterprise system of marketing to go unchallenged.

The idea of having local associations scattered through the country, each with its own officers, was adopted from the first. These local branches were to constitute the educational facilities wherein farmers could develop their knowledge of the economic factors responsible for their problems and bring forward well-defined policies that would result in effective solutions. In an effort to profit by the experience of The Grange and the Patrons of Industry, they guarded zealously the independence of the new movement. "We must keep our organization non-partisan, non-political and non-trading", was their slogan. (2)

The story surrounding the organization of this movement is one of the most entrancing episodes in Canadian agricultural history. It was an effort to consummate some bond of union between the planless and widely scattered grain growers of the prairies so that they could defend themselves against the oppression of the organized grain trade.

Back in the nineties a group of grain dealers had formed the North-West Grain Dealers Association. Shortly thereafter the Winnipeg Produce and Grain Exchange, which later developed into the Winnipeg Grain Exchange, was organized. The Canadian Pacific Railway, a multi-million dollar corporation, had been a third partner in the grain handling business. The combination of the trio was known as "the syndicate of syndicates" to grain growers from the banks of the Red River to the foothills of the Rockies.

In an attempt to curb the power of this "alliance" an Act of Parliament, described as the Manitoba Grain Act, was enacted in 1900 and provided for general supervision of the grain trade; its provisions were extended to the North West Territories. From the very beginning the Territorial Grain Growers Association mainly concerned itself with the details of the practices used in the handling of grain and concentrated its atten-

(2) Hopkins Moorhouse, "Deep Furrows", p. 87.

tion on this "Grain Act". The Act was revised in May, 1902 with the demands of the Territorial Grain Growers Association embodied in the legislation. The outstanding feature of the changes was the regulation with respect to the distribution of box cars to shippers. It was enacted that a car order book must be kept at each railway station, and it became the duty of the agent to distribute cars according to the requests entered in the book by elevator companies or by individual farmers. The Act also provided that "at any shipping point where no loading platform exists, cars shall be furnished for loading grain direct from farm wagons". [3]

This grain growers organization early showed its teeth and became a recognized unit in the first year of its existence when it opposed the high-handed actions of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company in the fall of 1902. It daringly measured its strength against the giant transportation company in the Sintaluta Test Case in the court of the North West Territories, accusing the railway and its agent at Sintaluta of being guilty of violating the Grain Act in the allotment of cars at the shipping point. The case was tried in the public school building in Sintaluta. Evidence was submitted to show that the two elevators had been given priority in the distribution of box cars over farmers who had requested cars by entering their names in the car order book. So conclusive was the evidence that a verdict against the railways and their agents was inevitable. [4]

The railway company decided to ask for an appeal and took the case to the Supreme Court of Canada, but the decision of the lower court was sustained. The company took its defeat with good grace, and henceforth has acted in accordance with the law in its allocation of grain cars.

The effect of the successful court action was far-reaching. For the first time, western farmers had a real glimpse of the possibility of united action for their mutual protection. Farmers everywhere began to make inquiries about the organization

(3) L. A. Wood, "A History of Farmers' Movements in Canada", p. 177.
(4) H. S. Patton, Ph. D. — "Grain Growers Co-operation in Western Canada", p. 35.

which had turned the tables on the railway corporation. When it became known that the Association had been instrumental, as well, in securing amendments to the Grain Act in 1902, the membership boomed, and the movement grew into the most powerful voice of the agrarian populace in western Canada.

Manitoba farmers became interested and were the next to organize. A Territorial Grain Growers Association was started in that province, at Virden, early in the year 1903. Motherwell, the "Grand Old Man" of Canadian agriculture, was present at this first meeting and declared emphatically that the farmers' occupation was the most important in Canada and therefore it was their duty to organize for the maintenance of this primary occupation. Within a few weeks it became evident that the new organization was acceptable to Manitoba farmers. In March of the same same year, the first convention was held in Brandon and the "Manitoba Grain Growers Association" was organized, with J. N. Scallion as its first president and Roderick C. McKenzie as secretary.

The amendment of 1903 to the Manitoba Grain Act may be regarded as a direct result of the discussions and representations made by the two western Grain Growers Associations. [5] In 1904 the Inspection Act was passed which recognized the importance of western grain. Thus there were at this time two Acts in force under which the grain trade was regulated.

In Alberta, as mentioned in the previous chapter, the Canadian Society of Equity had been established at the beginning of 1905, but dissension soon split the organization. One of the locals formed the Alberta Farmers' Association, which became more or less a partner to the Grain Growers Association of Saskatchewan and Manitoba. R. Sheppard played a leading role in the Alberta development. He went to Ottawa to plead for the institution of special grades for Alberta winter wheat, and the Inspection and Sales Act was amended with that object in view. Also, at the Association's suggestion, three creameries were formed in the province under governmental control.

(5) J. C. Mills, "A Study of the Canadian Council of Agriculture", p. 16.

After competing with the Canadian Society of Equity for years, and after many tribulations, the Alberta Farmers' Association joined forces with the Society in 1909 and adopted the name "United Farmers of Alberta" — "Our Motto, Equity". The new organization was led at the beginning by James Bower, and later by J. Speakman. By 1912 the membership had increased to 7,190 and it became a powerful and lasting force in that province.

Being primarily an educational movement, the basic task undertaken by the leaders of these farm organizations was the study of social and economic problems, to provide their membership with proper information on prevailing injustices and with possible means of remedial action. They knew that education is right thinking and right thinking can only come through accurate information. It was their aim to educate the primary producers in a knowledge of their legal and political rights, in an ability to discuss their grievances and make representations for their redress. They were convinced that the root of the farmer's plight was his individualism, his isolation, and his ignorance of matters outside his own narrow practical experience. (6)

At every convention, the farmers found some additional weak spot in the Grain Act and suggested remedial legislation. It all seemed so wonderful to get together to form requests for improvements and find that many of them were granted in full or in part at least, by the government. The western farmer had scarcely dared to dream of such achievements before.

As the organized farmers attained a measure of self-confidence they declared themselves in definite language. The timid quaver disappeared from their voices. They gave a lusty holler once in a while to make themselves heard. They developed the nerve to ask and receive, the will to seek and find. (7)

At their 1905 convention the Manitoba Association, for the first time, discussed the possibilities of co-operative handling

(6) W. L. Morton, "Progressive Party in Canada", p. 11.
(7) Hopkins Moorhouse, "Deep Furrows", p. 264.

of grain and a committee was appointed to study the question. In a resolution they openly condemned the North-West Grain Dealers' Association as a combine or conspiracy and a menace to free trade. In company with other interested bodies, the Association was able to persuade the Federal Government to appoint a Royal Commission in 1906 under the chairmanship of John Miller, to inquire into the relations existing between grain dealers and producers in the West and all other matters connected with the grain trade. The Commission brought in a report which led to extensive amendments to the Manitoba Grain Act in 1908 (which became the foundation of the Canada Grain Act.)

E. A. PARTRIDGE

E. A. Partridge of Sintaluta, Saskatchewan, a man apparently singled out by destiny, played an outstanding role in the farmers' progress. He was a man of unflinching courage and extraordinary vision and exerted a remarkable influence in the

shaping of agrarian history in the West. A fiery reformer by nature, with an unbending will and a tongue that left no one in doubt of his opinion, he was very much in the public eye. He conducted a crusade against the Winnipeg Grain Exchange, which he described as a combine with a gambling hell thrown in. He was instrumental in having three separate inquiries made into Grain Exchange policies and practices. (8)

Most of his work was done after he became president of the Grain Growers Company — the first co-operative grain handling organization. In this organization he was the moving spirit. It was he who first advanced the idea of Co-operative grain handling and spearheaded the formation of the Company in 1906.

It is evident that the western farmers of that time showed a remarkable degree of understanding and their capacity for collective action was not disregarded by political parties, especially on the provincial level. The Manitoba Government quickly responded and adopted most of the leading proposals of the organized farmers. The Manitoba Railway Act, the establishment of a publicly-owned telephone system, and the decisive action of compelling the Winnipeg Grain Exchange to accept the Grain Growers' Grain Company as a member in 1907, were all concrete examples. (9)

A demand for tariff reduction was always a prominent feature in the program of these early farm associations. It was their agitation in the West and that of the Grange in the East, against the demand of the Canadian Manufacturing Association for tariff increases, that persuaded the Dominion Government to appoint the Fielding Commission in 1905 to undertake a comprehensive inquiry into the tariff question. Hearings were held in 39 places across Canada, where officials of the organizations had an opportunity to prove that custom tariffs were detrimental to the basic industry of the country and were liable to become a menace to the entire economy. Before the

(8) W. C. Good, "Early Efforts of Farm Organization". p. 57
(9) W. L. Morton, "Progressive Party in Canada", p. 13.

Commission began its rounds, all available evidence pointed to tariff increases, but when the revision occurred in 1907 tariffs were not increased. [10]

After the creation of the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta in 1905, the Territorial Grain Growers' Association changed its name to the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association. Motherwell became the first Minister of Agriculture in Saskatchewan and later served as Minister of Agriculture in Canada from 1926 to 1930.

Through the instrumentality of the Grain Growers' Grain Company, a farm paper, the "Grain Growers Guide", was established in 1908. It dealt fearlessly with economic and social questions affecting the farmers' well being. The Editor, G. F. Chipman, was always ready to call a spade a spade. Being free from political restrictions, he did not hesitate to get after politicians of all stripes whenever their actions seemed to provide fit topics for criticism. [11]

In 1907 the Inter-Provincial Council was formed to create a bond of union among the provincial farm organizations, to discuss and promote legislation that was inter-provincial in scope and character. It was under that name that the executive officers of the organizations in the three prairie provinces first came together to discuss problems affecting the farm movement as a whole. It proved of such distinct benefit that agitation became pronounced for enlargement of the Council including The Grange of Ontario.

In 1908, The Grange was accepted and the Inter-Provincial Council was reorganized under the name, "Canadian Council of Agriculture". It began to assume a more national character and spoke for agriculture as an organized entity. The main purpose of the Council was to facilitate the farmers' demands for the necessary federal legislation, as well as to co-ordinate thinking and activity in the provinces, and to stimulate the organization of farmers in other provinces.

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(10) M. H. Staples, "The Challenge of Agriculture", p. 29.
(11) Hopkins Moorhouse, "Deep Furrows", p. 163.

In 1910 the Grain Growers' Association of Saskatchewan and Manitoba and the United Farmers of Ontario, together with The Grange of Ontario, led by the infant Canadian Council of Agriculture, staged a "Seige on Ottawa". The idea was advanced first by the "Toronto Sun", organ of The Grange. The Grain Growers' Guide concurred, and prodded the farmers to action.

On the morning of December 16th, a monster farm delegation, eight hundred strong, from almost every part of Canada, proceeded to march four abreast to the Parliament Buildings, where they were admitted to the floor and galleries of the House of Commons. D. W. McCuaig, president of the Canadian Council of Agriculture, introduced twenty speakers who presented to the government the farmers' views on tariffs, grain handling and other matters. The main discussion was led by R. C. McKenzie, the very able secretary of the Council.

At the end of the presentation, Rt. Hon. Wilfred Laurier, the Prime Minister, arose to reply. On the request for abolition of custom tariffs, he promised nothing more than due consideration of the demand. On the grain handling questions, he directed the attention of the farmers to the possibility of an all-Canadian grain route and declared the government's readiness to proceed with the construction of the Hudson Bay Railway.

The Seige of Ottawa was regarded as a decided success. The strategic value of this determined effort was doubtless responsible to a great extent for the Laurier Government's proposal of reciprocity with the United States, which meant free entrance of Canadian natural products into that country. It was something most Canadian farmers had dreamed of ever since Confederation. Approaches to this effect had been made before but the United States government had always asked, in return, for the free entrance into Canada of their manufactured goods, which under the Canadian policy of protection to manufacturers, had been thought impossible. This time, however, to everybody's surprise, the United States accepted the Canadian Government's proposal for free trade. It was almost too good to be true.

But the protected interests in Canada became alarmed, calculating, no doubt, that this break in the tariff wall would prove to be the edge of the wedge which would ultimately overthrow the Canadian national policy of protection, in force since 1878. The Canadian Manufacturers' Association immediately set about trying to offset the effects of the Seige. With appeals to race and creed prejudice, in a dozen conflicting passions, the issue was beclouded and the farmers' thinking befuddled to the point where even they voted against reciprocity in the election of 1911, when it was the leading issue. This was proof once more that the farmer is a "horse to work", but that it is an effort for him to do team work because he is used to going in single harness.

Labouring this point in his book "The Challenge of Agriculture", Melville H. Staples describes a meeting called at the "Sun" office, Toronto, a week after the election and attended by those prominent in The Grange at the time. Referring to the behaviour of the farmers, one of those present rather caustically expressed it: "the farmers have been fools again. Let them fry in their own grease for a while".

The reciprocity battle, to which the farm organizations had been committed, created such confusion in the farmers' minds, that it almost dealt a fatal blow to The Grange in Ontario. In the West, the passing of the Grain Bill in 1912 had a unifying effect as it provided for the Canada Grain Act, which ever since has been considered as the "Magna Carta" of the grain growers. The Canada Grain Act and the setting up of the Board of Grain Commissioners, recognized as the "policemen of the grain trade", can be rightly regarded as major achievements in the farm saga.

Although they had lost the battle for reciprocity, the Canadian Council of Agriculture never ceased to fight against the protective tariff principle. The Council was under the leadership at this time of D. W. McCuaig, who was also president of the Grain Growers Association and who possessed the con-

fidence of the agrarian west to a remarkable degree. He was worthy of that confidence because he had abundant courage, a very necessary element in the make-up of a successful leader.

D. W. McCUAIG

In spite of the relentless agitation of the powerful Canadian Manufacturers Association, the organized farmers of the day not only succeeded in keeping custom tariffs from going up but actually, from time to time, achieved some reductions. In 1914, farm tractors costing not more than $1,400.00 and ditching machines costing not more than $3,500.00 were allowed entrance into Canada, free of duty. [12]

How detrimental the system of protection had become to the consumer was pointed out by the Canadian Council of Agriculture in publishing the facts about tariff. In 1916 Canadians paid $133,000,000 in custom revenue on imported goods. But under the protective system, the consumer likewise had to

(12) J. W. Ward, "The Canadian Council of Agriculture", p. 25

pay a tax on goods of a domestic origin, which tax found its way into the bank account of private individuals alone. Considering that the domestic trade was about four times as great as Canada's foreign trade, it could readily be seen what a crushing weight was laid upon the country's consumer.

In 1914, a women's section of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association was organized. Mrs. Violet McNaughton convinced the men, that women should have a special place in the farm movement, and was made president of the new women's section. Then the women's movement spread to other provinces and in between the endless rounds of spinning, weaving, knitting and hundreds of other tasks, they were helping to lay the foundation for a brighter future on the farm front.

High on the list of the various provincial organizations' endeavours to improve economic conditions in the agricultural industry stands the formation of farmer-owned companies for the purpose of entering the grain trade. Besides the Grain Growers' Company, the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company was organized in 1911, and the Alberta Farmers' Co-operative Elevator Company in 1913. In 1917 the Grain Growers' Grain Company and the Alberta Co-operative Elevator Company amalgamated to form the "United Grain Growers Limited".

Towering far above all other accomplishments was the fact that a strong conviction of self-reliance and independent thinking had been developed into a relatively well-organized bloc of public opinion within a comparatively short time and was fighting for justice and a square deal for the farmers. What had formerly been a maze of wasted manpower was transformed into a community citizenship enterprise. Amazing courage and unanimity prevailed in the provincial organizations and the Canadian Council of Agriculture exemplified the principles of unselfish leadership, united in an Anglo-Saxon defiance against further injustices.

It is entirely fitting that we should honour this pioneer movement from whose efforts stem practically all of the prairie

farm organizations that have since developed. This early movement had a decisive influence in the economic, social and political history of the West. It could be described as a sort of chiropractic process for alleviating the pains and straightening out the kinks in the farmer's backbone which he acquired from too much stooping under the weight of his burden. The "Backbone of the Country" set out to prove that he was not spineless, but merely disjointed.

The seeds sown by The Grange, the Patron's of Industry, the Grain Growers Association, and other early groups grew into a crop of confidence and self-respect. No more did the "Man of the Soil" accept whatever crumbs fell his way. He was convinced that, as a clean-living, right-thinking, hard-working human being, he had a right to "a square deal". As manager of the greatest manufacturing concern — "Nature Unlimited" — requiring foresight, common sense, a lifetime of study and practical application, he learned to command his rights. He had become a power in the land.

The Grain Growers movement left its footprints in the sands of time —pointing forward.

CHAPTER 7

THE UNITED FARMERS

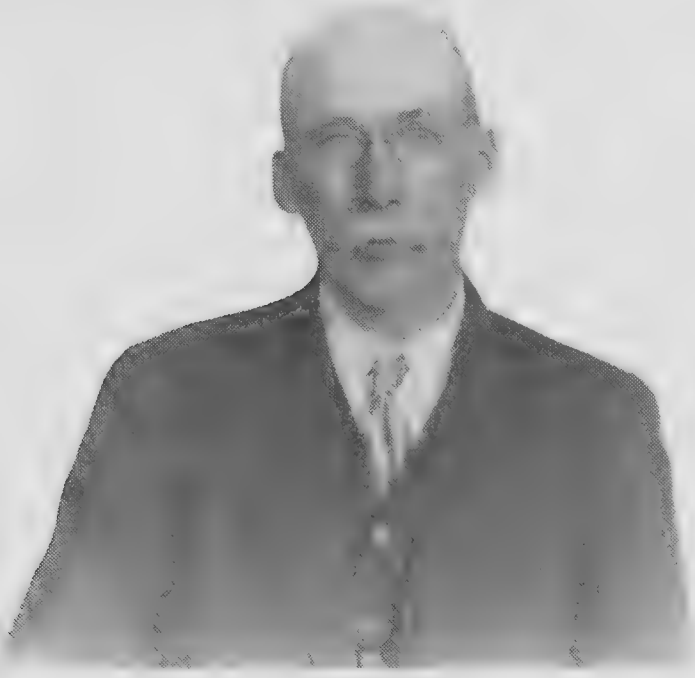
1916 - 1935

In contrast to previous movements the "United Farmers" did not begin as a new organization but, rather, as a continuation of the Grain Growers Association. In the West it was actually no more than a gradual transition to another name which the Alberta Association had used since its inception, while in the East new organizations were added. By 1920 all provincial organizations, except the Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association, were organized under the name "United Farmers".

Adoption of the name "United Farmers" could be regarded as part of a broadening-out program to make the movement more acceptable to all farmers. Having gone so far, the farm leaders of the day believed that they must not stop; that they had just got nicely underway; that they must go on educating the rank and file of the Canadian plowment to develop their skill and knowledge, to bring forth from among their ranks more leaders capable of handling any position or any situation in the direction of their affairs, and to improve their economic as well as their social standing in the nation.

After Alberta, Ontario farmers were the next to organize under the name "United Farmers". While The Grange in Ontario had regained a certain aura of youthfulness since its union with the Ontario Farmers' Association, and had ninety subordinate Granges in working condition in 1910, it became apparent by 1913 that, as a rallying ground for those who desired to fight the farmers' battle, it had outlived its years of usefulness. When The Grange met for its annual convention in 1912 only a handful of delegates made their appearance. It seemed that, like all other farm movements in the province, it had gradually

faded away. The situation was critical, inasmuch as within a space of little more than ten years Ontario's yeomen had watched three organizations shrivel and fade away. [1]



J. J. MORRISON

After a trip through western Canada, J. J. Morrison, of Arthur, Ontario, did much serious thinking; he became determined to do something to organize a farm movement in the East on the same basis as the Grain Growers Associations in the West. Through his efforts the remains of dwindling organizations in Ontario were brought together to form the basis of a new and far-reaching organization. His enthusiasm, combined with abundant energy, made him a masterful organizer, and he was a sincere friend of the farmers. On March 20, 1914, the "United Farmers of Ontario" was organized, with E. C. Drury as its first president and J. J. Morrison as secretary. A co-operative business enterprise, the United Farmers' Co-operative Company Limited, was launched at the same time.

(1) L. A. Wood, "A History of Farmers' Movements in Canada" p. 274

Four and a half months later World War I began to throw its fiery glow over land and sea and interrupted the orderly development of the farm movement. This conflagration diverted the farmers' interest to some extent, but the United Farmers of Ontario progressed steadily, with co-operative enterprises following in its wake. By 1916 the membership increased to 5,000 with 150 clubs organized throughout the province. The same year the U.F.O. formally aligned itself with the Canadian Council of Agriculture. [2]

In 1917 the United Farmers of British Columbia was started. In 1918 the United Farmers of New Brunswick sprang up. In 1919 the Fermiers-Unis of Quebec came into being and in 1920 the United Farmers of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island were formed. All of them, except the United Farmers of British Columbia, affiliated with the Canadian Council of Agriculture. This made possible a more united effort on a national scale.

The Canadian Council of Agriculture, which had been interpreting the farmers' collective mind on federal issues since 1909, discharged its responsibility faithfully by enunciating the farmers' demands at Ottawa and co-ordinating legislative enactments in the provinces. It exerted a remarkable influence on legislation of interest to organized farmers, especially in view of the weakness of agrarian representation in Parliament.

But the national organization did not possess adequate sources of revenue to maintain its activities. Moreover, the opinion had been slowly rising within the various Associations that farmers' co-operatives owed their existence to the provincial organization, and therefore should help to finance by grants, not only the provincial Association, but also the national organization. Hence, it was natural for the provincial Association to look with favour upon the idea of giving commercial companies representation on the Council, and eventually the existing fear of domination by commercial interests was overcome by financial necessity.

(2) L. A. Wood, "A History of Farmers' Movements in Canada" p. 277

In 1916 the Council was enlarged by granting the admission of farmers' commercial companies for the purpose of providing financial stability for the Council's growing obligations, and to add the knowledge and experience gained by the officials of the co-operatives in the businesses in which they were engaged.

What had formerly been divided forces were now united and manifesting a highly commendable spirit of harmony — a power that no government could afford to ignore.

RODERICK McKENZIE

Roderick McKenzie was the primary mover behind the Council's activities. As well, he wielded considerable influence in the other provinces where he was well known and appreciated. He had been secretary of the Manitoba Association from the first and then was elected secretary of the Council. He was known as "well-posted McKenzie".

For the purpose of making farmers politically more conscious, the Canadian Council of Agriculture, representing the organized farmers of eight of the nine provinces, drafted the "Farmers' Platform" at a meeting in Winnipeg in December, 1916. This platform was revised in 1918 and given the impressive title, "The New National Policy". It was inaugurated for the purpose of inducing farmers to give their vote only to those political candidates who openly supported the farmers' platform and who could be relied upon as Members of Parliament, to live up to their campaign pledges. (3) The Policy was adopted by the member organizations in 1919 and received wide publicity.

The new platform was, in fact, a comprehensive program which, put into effect, would have reshaped the development of the Canadian economy. It was a flat challange to the "National Policy", in force since 1879, of using the power of government to foster Canadian manufacturing at the expense of agriculture and the consumer. (4) It pointed out that the three most important economic problems in Canada were "tariffs, taxation and transportation."

The farmers' platform was drafted to develop an intelligent, well-informed electorate, not to create a party machine. But the persistent neglect of the farmers' problems, and primarily the refusal of the Dominion Government to make any serious effort quickly enough to meet agrarian requests, brought about a growing feeling within the farm movement that the farmers' difficulties had not received sufficient consideration. This contenton promoted the idea of farmer participation in politics and finally led to political action through a third political party.

It was an expression of the farmers' revolt against postwar inflation and the indebtedness caused by wartime expansion, and the return to the free market in wheat with the termination of the Wheat Board in 1920. This was too much for farmers to take from a government, so they prepared to meet the challenge.

(3) Hopkins Moorhouse — "Deep Furrows" p. 272
(4) W. L. Morton — Progressive Party in Canada" p. 62

This desire for political action became most pronounced in Ontario, where the United Farmers Association had a membership of 48,000 enrolled in 1,130 clubs in 1919. It became the first provincial organization to be involved in party politics. "Go into politics, or quit farming" was the state of mind among the rank and file farmers. They entered the Ontario provincial election of 1919 and to their surprise, and perhaps somewhat to their embarrassment, they were swept into power. J. J. Morrison, "the man of all things", was asked to become Premier of the new Farmers' Government. He declined to accept the great honour they would have bestowed upon him, but in turn nominated E. C. Drury for the premiership who, in co-operation with labour, formed a government.

It may be pointed out that the main spark behind the political fire that raged within the hearts of Ontario farmers was lit in Ottawa in 1918 — the last year of the first World War. During the war years farmers made an heroic effort to speed up production, as the government had asked them to do. In return, the government promised exemption from military service for farmers' sons who were needed to carry on the stimulated war production program. But a bombshell broke when, right in the middle of seeding in the spring of 1918, the government by Order-in- Council cancelled all exemptions. Immediate dissent was heard among farmers from Halifax to Vancouver and a huge delegation of angry farmers, mainly from Ontario and Quebec, immediately descended upon Ottawa.

However, the governments' attitude was quite unsympathetic. By some it was regarded as actually defiant. Prime Minister Robert Borden gave them no hope of any change in the Order-in-Council. When the farmers formed a procession and marched to the doors of the House of Commons, their petition for admission was refused point-blank. [5]

Malicious criticism at once sprang from the pages of the press. One professional humorist described the Ottawa ex-

(5) H. H. Hannam — "Pulling Together for 25 Years"

pedition in language that was ribald in its composition. A few excerpts may suffice to indicate its descent to coarseness:

"They had not baggage, save their mackintoshes, nay not so much as a toothbrush. Some gawping here and others basking there until moved on, they wandered about, and because pie was ten cents a cut and hollow-chested at that, many chewed their nails inasmuch as that was cheaper. When night came the "Sons of the Soil" had no place to lay their heads; they remained outside and ate grass. They slept in the park and open spaces, but they had no ease inasmuch as the wind played zizz with their walrus mustaches."

The stinging rebuff which they had received at the hands of the government, and the abusive attack immediately launched upon the U.F.O. by the press, welded the organized farmers of Ontario into a compact group. Things began to move. Their treatment in Ottawa made them disgusted with the kind of representation they had, and immediate political action was advocated. The ensuing provincial election proved to be a wicked battle but they won and finally had their own government in the legislature. In 1920 their membership rose to 60,000 organized in 1,465 clubs.

In his book, "Pulling Together for 25 Years", H. H. Hannam, (now Dr. Hannam, and president of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture) describes the 1919 convention of the United Farmers of Ontario and the jubilant feeling prevailing after the victorious election, in these thrilling terms:

"What a Convention that was! The attendance exceeded anything hitherto attained. The co-operative business was expanding with leaps and bounds. The farmers were in power at Queen's Park. They were looking toward Ottawa. They were on the point of buying their own paper. The Women's Organization was off to a good start. Enthusiasm ran high. For once, Mr. Farmer was literally sitting on top of the world."

The enactment of social laws was the first concern of the new Ontario government. In 1920 legislation was passed to provide for fixing minimum wages for women; payment of ad-

equate allowance for mothers; protection of deserted wives, and children born out of wedlock; public health nursing and work with respect to maternal and child hygiene was expanded by the Department of Agriculture; a provincial long term credit system was authorized; legislation to pay fifty percent of cost of rural Hydro-electric transmission lines was passed; an ambitious road program was undertaken and in four years more than half of Ontario's roads had been surfaced in an up-to-date manner. (6)

The New Brunswick and Nova Scotia United Farmers organization plunged into politics in 1920, shortly after their formation. A platform was developed which called for a more advanced agricultural policy; extension of agricultural education; improved highways; an equalized taxation system; conservation of natural resources; co-operative legislation; higher salaries for school teachers, etc.

A considerable number of farmer candidates were elected in both provinces but they never gained enough strength to capture the government. Nevertheless, the United Farmers groups in the Maritime provincial legislatures were responsible for considerable reduction in taxes as well as for other improvements, by exposing scandals alleging that great sums of money had been wasted or grafted in the construction of certain roads.

By this time, the United Farmers of Alberta had prospered greatly under the leadership of Henry Wise Wood. His dynamic personality, eloquence and ability, together with his unselfish efforts and the work of those who assisted him, seemed to awaken the farmers of that province. Under this development of mind and character, the U.F.A. became a model of what a farm organization should be. Outside of their legislative achievements on the provincial level, this organization contributed tremendously to the advancement of the Co-operatives in Alberta. On the question of entering politics, Wood feared that the creation of a third party by the organized farmers would lead to the destruction of the farmers' organization.

(6) L. A. Wood—"A History of Farmers' Movements in Canada" p. 333. 334

But the Non-Partisan League, brought in from North Dakota in 1916, made rapid headway in Alberta. It was actually started in Swift Current, Saskatchewan, but was seriously ham-

HENRY WISE WOOD

pered in that province by internal friction and its influence remained small, whereas in Alberta it developed into a progressive group. The program of this new organization, like the parent League in the United States, was to enter politics to enable the farmers to control the provincial governments and use the resources of the province to construct a number of business enterprises, including terminal elevators and flour mills while provincial banks, operated at cost, were to be set up to provide cheap rural credit. As the strengh of the League increased, so did the demand of the farmers for a more independent approach toward political action. (7)

With the spreading of the League's doctrine and spirit, the U.F.A. decided to enter the provincial election in 1921.

(7) W. K. Ralph, "Henry Wise Wood of Alberta", p. 50

The atmosphere of a crusade, arising from the farmers' entry into politics, and the working up of feelings to a frenzy, resulted in the rout of the old parties, in spite of the fact that the Liberal government of Alberta had been friendly to the farmers' movement, and the Premier himself was a farmer, loved and respected by the organized farmers. (8)

The League was swept into power mainly by advocating a new theory of economic group representation instead of independent political parties. Wood proposed that the U.F.A. should enter politics, not to create a third party, but to function as an organized economic interest group. It was not to succumb to the petty strifes and caucus rule of the traditional party system, but rather to settle its differences with other organized classes through the law of resistance and arrive at a common level through co-operation. (9) H. H. Greenfield, vice-president of the U.F.A., was summoned to become government leader after Wood declined to accept the nomination for the Premiership. Greenfield was later succeeded by J. E. Brownlee. Feeling that it had achieved its objective, the Non-Partisan League dissolved after the U.F.A. decided to enter politics.

In Manitoba the ideas advocated by the United Farmers movement to a great extent had influenced the thinking of the government since 1916. Such legislation as women's suffrage; mothers' allowance; child welfare legislation; civil service reform; workmen's compensation; etc., was enacted. But the belief that only farmers could properly represent farmers had, nonetheless, taken hold and the Manitoba Grain Growers' Association, after changing its name in 1919 to "United Farmers of Manitoba", entered the election in 1922 and also swept unexpectedly into power. When Colin J. Burnell, president of the U.F.M. and George Chipman, a prospective leader, were defeated at the polls, they called on John Bracken, president of the Manitoba College of Agriculture, to assume the Premiership.

It might be assumed that Saskatchewan farmers at the

(8) W. L. Morton — "The Progressive Party of Canada" p. 112
(9) W. L. Morton — "The Progressive Party in Canada" p. 91

time were just as politically minded as those of other provinces; but the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association did not enter active politics. The Liberal Government of Saskatchewan had strong supporters in the Association and the Premier averted the issue by inviting J. A. Maharg, president of the Association, to become Minister of Agriculture. To scotch the farmers' entry into politics the Premier called an early election, but so serious was the threat that a month's further delay might have meant defeat. The Liberal government of Saskatchewan at that time was badly shaken when twelve independents were elected.

What was intended by the Canadian Council of Agriculture to be a strategic move to press the farmers' platform on the old parties and governments, turned into the systematic creation of a third party. The outburst of the fever for independent political action grew. The success at the polls in the provinces gave courage to rural people all over Canada, and from the provincial they stepped into the federal political arena under the party name of "Progressives".

In the federal election of 1921 the United Farmers' movement, to everyone's amazement, elected 65 members, more than half of them from the West. T. A. Crerar was chosen as leader of the party. The National Progressive Party became the second largest group in the House of Commons and held the balance of power between Liberal and Conservatives, neither of whom had a clear majority. A number of important economic and social concepts which are today generally accepted, were brought to the attention of Parliament and the public by the Progressives. Several pieces of legislation benefitting agriculture were passed on the federal as well as on the provincial level.

Through their untiring efforts the Progressives brought about the restoration of the Crow's Nest Pass Agreement which reduced and governed the freight rates on western grain and which had been suspended by the government in 1919. [10] They demanded that construction and completion of the Hudson Bay Railway, which had been interrupted during the war years, be given priority over other transporation work undertaken by the

government. Their continuous probing of the old enemies, trusts and combines, brought about the strengthening of the Combine Investigation Act in 1923. The same year a special committee of the House of Commons was appointed, under the able leadership of Mr. McMaster, to inquire into and investigate every phase of agriculture and all business affecting the farmers. When, through the investigation of a Royal Commission in 1923, it was discovered that a monopoly existed in the fixation of lake freight rates on grain, the Progressives supported a Bill compelling all shipowners to file their rates with the Board of Grain Commissioners. Their relentless battle against tariffs, supported by the Canadian Council of Agriculture, paid dividends when the government in 1924 reduced the general schedule rate on farm implements from an average of approximately 22% to 12%, and fertilizers were put on the free list. (11)

But more than that, the Progressive movement brought to the forefront the resentment against inequality suffered by the western provinces under Confedereation. The transfer of natural resources to the western provinces in 1930 marked the end of the colonial status of the West. Through the Progressive movement the West gained political maturity and so equality could no longer be withheld.

By 1924 the position achieved by the Progressive Party improved to the point where on May 24th a Conservative Member of Parliament told the House of Commons that the Progressives were the actual rulers of the country, and that the executive government was "simply a Cabinet in custody". (12)

However, to everyone's surprise and disappointment, the Progressive leadership could not maintain solidarity. From the

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(10) By the terms of this agreement, framed originally in 1897, the C.P.R. had bound itself to accept a maximum schedule of rates on grain originated in the West and on certain manufactured commodities shipped from the East, in return for subsidies and concessions granted by the Dominion Government to the amount of $25 million, and 25 million acres of land; also portions of the line already built valued at $30 million and certain other concessions such as monopoly of traffic in the west for 20 years.

(11) L. A. Wood, "A History of Farmers' Movements in Canada", p. 361

(12) L. A. Wood, "A History of Farmers' Movements in Canada" p. 364

very beginning, Prime Minister W. L. Mackenzie King sought a closer working arrangement between the Progressives and his Liberal Party. With steady and careful manouvering by both sides, accompanied by a process of skullduggery beyond description, the integration of the two was finally effected when Mr. Crerar led the remnants of the Progressive Party into the Liberal fold in 1926.

Only a small group of faithfuls waged a grim struggle against the rapprochement with the Liberals. It was mainly the Alberta group that refused to secede. They remained independent and were called the "Ginger Group".

The whole political experiment on the federal level did not come up to the expectations of the farmers. In fact, it was regarded in many farm circles as a complete sell-out.

In the provincial political field the farmers experienced the same let-down. By 1923 symptoms of disharmony became evident among House members of the United Farmers of Ontario and the U.F.O. directorate. Secondly, at the 1923 Session some of the government members crossed the floor and denounced the leadership of Premier Drury, charging him with having plans for a fusion with the Liberals. The Premier categorically denied that any such negotiations had been conducted, but under the circumstances he decided to dissolve the legislature and call an election.

This squabble among themselves, and the circulation of numerous precarious stories for the consumption of farmers, brought on an almost complete defeat on polling day for the farmers' government in Ontario.

In Manitoba, Premier Bracken, the outsider, slowly and carefully effected the complete integration of the United Farmers Government of Manitoba into the Liberal Party — a performance free of disturbance.

The federal election of 1926 proved to be the end of the line for the Progressive movement. Only the United Farmers' Government of Alberta remained; it directed the affairs of

that province through the years of the depression until 1935, when it was overthrown by the Social Credit Party.

Such was the experience of the United Farmers in politics. It was a fantastic dream, equal to the glittering transformaation scene of a classic pantomime. It was an exciting era where history was made and the future was a bright, sunny vista. The phenomenal growth in membership during this period was unique in agrarian history. Lured by the smiles of the beckoning siren — politics — farmers eagerly reached out for the lure, which proved to be an illusion that faded away as suddenly as a prairie mirage.

The net result was that the finest educational and most powerful protective movement Canadian farmers ever had, began to wither on the vine. The organizations which had been the training ground for Premiers and Cabinet Ministers, which had promoted the policies and the welfare of the farmers in the Legislative Assemblies of the country for twenty years and had accomplished much in improving the lot of the producer, became now the victims of a laissez-faire attitude. The movement which had farm stability as its aim, and had made a definite imprint upon farm economy and the nation as a whole, was engulfed by suspicion, mistrust and lassitude. It was used, misused, and finally discarded.

The U.F.O. membership declined from 60,000 in 1921 to half that in 1922. The U.F.M. membership slipped from 16,000 in 1920 to 6,000 in 1923. The membership of the S.G.G.A. fell from 29,000 in 1920 to 21,000 in 1922. The N.F.A. membership dropped from 38,000 in 1921 to 21,000 in 1922. The U.F.A. membership dropped from 38,000 in 1921 to 15,000 in 1922. [13]

It seemed that the educational furrows plowed for twenty years were not deep enough to uproot the farmers' habitual characteristic of divided and lazy thinking.

When, in the labyrinth of politics, some of the farm leaders lost their sense of direction through being manipulated

(13) M. L. Morton — "Progressive Party in Canada" p. 212

by their political connections and friends, it had a disheartening effect even on those who had learned in twenty years to believe in a cause. With consciousness of the fact that some of these leaders had been contaminated with inconsistency to the point where they had become no more than "political demagogues" and a menace to their profession, farmers lost faith.

Results of the United Farmers' entry into the political arena by no means compensated for the cost. In the Maritimes, Quebec, and British Columbia, the United Farmers movement became almost non-existent after its unfortunate excursion into politics.

For the Canadian Council of Agriculture to become embroiled in this political revolt was a disastrous mistake. The original purpose of the movement was largely overlooked and neglected. Internal dissension became rampant; discord, and division became keynotes at the meetings. Conflicting personalities and views clashed at the Council table and the national body laid itself open to serious criticism. Its prestige was badly shaken. (14)

The footprints in the sands of time still were there. but they were pointing backward.

(14) J. C. Mills, in his Thesis — "A Study of the Canadian Council of Agriculture" p. 159

CHAPTER 8

FARMERS' UNION OF CANADA

1921 - 1949

After the United Farmers took the plunge into politics at the beginning of the twenties, a new organization arose in Saskatchewan in 1921 — the "Farmers' Union of Canada" (Saskatchewan Section). It was formed by some of the dissatisfied farmers of that province and it became a militant organization, preaching economic action instead of political action. Its aim was to organize the farmers for the inevitable class struggle in which they would attempt to fix farm prices above cost of production — a price reasonable for both producer and consumer.

This new movement had its roots in the postwar agricultural depression, and the growing reaction against the alleged domination of the conventions and policies of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association by a group who also variously shared offices in the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company and the Saskatchewan Grain Growers movement. There had always been considerable interlocking between the directorate of the two organizations. For years J. A. Maharg was president of both bodies, besides being from time to time a member of the Saskatchewan legislature and the federal Parliament.(1)

The first organizer of the Farmers' Union of Canada was N. H. Schwarz, who received his inspiration from the success of the co-operative effort between the orange and tobacco growers of the United States. His intention was to create an organization to advance the idea of a western Wheat Pool and with this in mind he organized a group in Ituna, Saskatchewan. Almost at the same time a similar group was organized in the same

(1) H. S. Patton, Ph. D. — "Grain Growers Co-operatives in Western Canada" p. 213

region, at Kelvington, by L. P. McNamee and J. Thompson. Both these men had been former railway workers and were inspired by the "One Big Union", an industrial union movement at that time making strides in the West. The two groups corresponded and finally joined forces. (2) McNamee, a broad-shouldered plainsman and an aggressive leader, became president and Schwarz became secretary of the new set-up.

L. P. McNAMEE

This organization marked the beginning of the return to economic action as opposed to political action. The farmers of Saskatchewan, as well as those of other provinces, had found that direct political action was not very effective in curing their ills and now they sought their salvation in the application of the doctrine of self-help through the co-operative movement. The question of representation in the legislative bodies of Canada was left to political parties.

While drawing its membership mainly from Saskatchewan, the Farmers' Union of Canada was organized on a

(2) W. L. Morton — "Progressive Party in Canada" p. 212

national basis with local lodges. In July, 1923, the Union claimed over 50 lodges, some of which were in Alberta and Manitoba, and by this time it was beginning to test its strength to the point where it brought pressure to bear on the Saskatchewan government to declare a moratorium in favour of farmer debtors. [3]

A group of people in Manitoba, who recognized the extent of the harm done to the United Farmers of Manitoba by its entry into the field of party politics, were ready to support the new movement. The Farmers' Union of Canada (Manitoba Section) was set up in 1923, under the leadership of Fred Borden.

In Alberta, under C. H. Harris, the Farmers' Union of Canada attracted a number of recruits and continued as a militant group in opposition to the older more moderate United Farmers of Alberta, which at that time constituted the government of Alberta.

On the whole the Farm Union groups in the various provinces were supported by people who saw how thorough the political despoiler had been and who were convinced that participation in politics was detrimental to any farm organization — a conviction that has prevailed and intensified itself in the farmers' minds ever since. Experience had taught them that the pioneers who started the Territorial Grain Growers' Association back in 1901 were right when they adopted the principle that their organizations should be non-political.

This new farm movement came at a time when western farmers were demanding action. Wheat prices on the Grain Exchange declined from $2.78 in September, 1920 to $1.76 in April, 1921 and by November had dropped to $1.11 a bushel. Grain growers were disgusted with a system under which a wagon load of wheat might bring twenty dollars less in the afternoon than it did in the morning. [4] These conditions occurred after

(3) H. S. Patton, Ph.D. — "Grain Growers Co-operatives in Western Canada" p. 214

(4) J. C. Mills, in his Thesis — "A Study of the Canadian Council of Agriculture" p. 214

the government refused to reinstate the Wheat Board through which the wheat crop of 1919-20 was marketed.

When it was unable to persuade the federal government to continue the Wheat Board, the Canadian Council of Agriculture began to consider a new idea of a non-stock, non-profit type of commodity pooling, as an alternative method for stabilizing prices. Implementation of this marketing method, which had been developed in California, appeared to offer a finer form of agricultural co-operation.

While it is impossible to treat in full scope all the preliminaries preceding the organization of the Pools, it is significant to observe that when the government refused to continue with the Wheat Board the Canadian Council of Agriculture was the first to bring up the idea of pool marketing. It was discussed at several meetings and finally a Wheat Pool Committee was set up by the Council to study the feasibility of pooling wheat. A detailed plan was drawn up by the Committee in 1920 in which it suggested that, with a contract sign-up of 60% of the wheat crop for five years, a Wheat Pool was feasible. Conference after conference was held by the Council for the purpose of reaching an agreement, but nothing definite was done until the Farmers' Union took over.

It seems that the lack of understanding on the issue arose from the influence of the leadership derived from the commercial organizations affiliated with the Council.

At their second convention in 1923 the Farmers' Union of Canada (Saskatchewan Section) passed a resolution in favour of immediate inauguration of a wheat pool. They decided to extend an invitation to Aaron Sapiro, the California co-operative marketing expert, to come to Saskatchewan and tell the prairie wheat farmers about the co-operative idea of pooling agricultural products in order to stabilize prices. Mr. Sapiro accepted the invitation and starting in Alberta, this pool expert passed like a meteor over the three prairie provinces and left behind him a trail of light which resulted in the formation of the prairie Wheat Pools as we have them today.

Pool marketing first became a reality in Western Canada late in 1923, through the independent action of the United Farmers of Alberta, whose executive had become impatient with the lack of progress in Council pool conferences. In Alberta there seemed to have been more uniform approach to the problem than in the other provinces. While Manitoba adopted a "wait and see" attitude, Saskatchewan opinions were split. After the Farmers' Union of Canada (Saskatchewan Section) came out in favour of a single contract pool as was advocated by Mr. Sapiro, the board of directors of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association decided, at a meeting in July, 1923, to proceed with the organization of a voluntary provincial pool. Thus the two groups were taking the initiative independently in the organization of a pool. (5)

Again, the reason for these differences seems to have been the influence of the leadership from the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company in the Grain Growers' Association.

The difference of approach was finally overcome when the Grain Growers Association, under pressure from their membership and because of the inroad made into their membership by the Farmers' Union of Canada (Saskatchewan Section) decided to give up their non-contract pool idea. The two organizations agreed to set up a joint committee in order to organize a Saskatchewan contract pool, and so marketing of pool wheat began in that province in 1924. In Manitoba, the annual convention of the U.F.M. at the beginning of 1924 formally endorsed the formation of a provincial pool, and with the aid of an organization loan of $10,000.00 from the United Grain Growers Company, the Manitoba Wheat Pool began operation in the same year. (6)

With the three provincial pools thus organized to handle the 1924 wheat crop, the policy of establishing a Central Sales Agency to market all pool wheat was implemented and almost

(5) H. S. Patton, Ph. D. — "Grain Growers' Co-operatives in Western Canada" p. 392

(6) H. S. Patton, Ph. D. — "Grain Growers' Co-operatives in Western Canada" p. 222

overnight the Wheat Pools became the world's greatest co-operative enterprise. Their story is one of the finest chapters in the history of western Canada.

While this great achievement, spearheaded by the Farmers' Union, had been accomplished by men who knew what they wanted, the Canadian Council of Agriculture, actually the original promoter of the idea, was prevented from taking part in its implementation. Some Council members seemed to be completely out of step with the farmers' movement in the demand for the Central Sales Agency. The Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company was regarded by many farmers, as one organization that was bitterly opposed to the creation of a pool. J. B. Musselman, J. N. Riddell, and J. A. Maharg had the controlling influence over the activities of the organized farmers in Saskatchewan at the time and this trio was charged with attempting to prevent the formation of a pool. Apparently these leaders feared the creation of a pool as a threat to their company and their own security. (7)

Where, previously, political connections and considerations had created contention and disagreement within the Council constituting a handicap to progressive action, this time the overwhelming influence of the leadership from the farmer-owned commercial organizations was responsible for the Council's helpless position.

Joseph C. Mills, in his Thesis, "A Study of the Canadian Council of Agriculture", which was presented to the University of Manitoba in partial fulfilment of requirements leading to the degree of Master of Arts, described (on page 89) the effect of this commercial influence in these words: "Previously farm organizations had been able to and still could see eye to eye on certain basic issues. But as the commercial aspect of the movement became more and more important, so also grew the likelihood of internal dissension."

When it became clear that the business minds in the Council had prevented the national organization from heading

(7) J. C. Mills — "A Study of the Canadian Council of Agriculture" p. 176

the new project, through its failure to take decisive action and give leadership at a crucial time, the Farmers' Union took the lead. The importance of the Union became recognized and its membership grew, while the Canadian Council of Agriculture and the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator Company, became exposed to both overt and covert attacks from the Farmers' Union members and pool supporters. They regarded the Company's policies and methods as incompatible with the progress of the pool, and they sought by a process of "boring from within" to influence shareholders of the Company to elect delegates to the convention who were not only in favour of a pool, but who were willing to turn the Company's assets as well as its patronage over to the pool.

At the Company's annual meeting in November, 1925, it became evident that the Union had succeeded, as a majority of the delegates came prepared to bring about the merger of the farmers' two rival marketing organizations. After considerable negotiation the pool came forward with an offer to purchase, and agreement was reached to transfer the ownership of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Elevator system to the Saskatchewan Pool Elevator Limited.[8]

While the decision of the Company's shareholders to accept the pool's offer of purchase made possible the conciliation of the two groups of farm elevators, Saskatchewan farmers were still divided between the two rival membership organizations. The desirability of amalgamating the two bodies in the interest of solidarity was recognized on both sides, and a joint committee was appointed early in 1926 to work out a basis of union. Considerable difficulty was experienced in reconciling policies and personalities. While the Grain Growers Association was a provincial organization, the Farmers' Union of Canada was organized as a national body, with a number of lodges in Manitoba and Alberta, as well as in Saskatchewan where lay its main strength.

(8) H. S. Patton, Ph. D. — "Grain Growers' Co-operatives in Western Canada" p. 235

After several months of study and conference, the amalgamation committee drew up a basis of union and set of bylaws, which in July 1926 were separately submitted to conventions of the two associations meeting concurrently in Saskatoon. The separate sessions culminated in the march of the delegates of one group to the convention hall of the other and, amid mass cheering and formal handshaking by leaders, amalgamation of the two rival organizations was dramatically consummated under the name, "United Farmers of Canada, Saskatchewan Section."[9] J. A. Stoneman was elected president. He was a valuable platform speaker and a recognized personality.

J. A. STONEMAN

The alliance was a victory for the Farmers' Union. Its policies, on the whole, prevailed in the constitution of the new organization. The principles, that no office of the United Farmers of Canada (S.S.) shall be held by the same person continuously for more than two years; that the organization shall not

(9) H. S. Patton, Ph. D. — "Grain Growers' Co-operatives in Western Canada" p. 393

ally itself with any political party; that there shall be no interlocking of the directorate of the U.F.C. with those of other organizations; and that no financal assistance shall be accepted from any commercial organization, were all accepted. (10)

It appeared that the farmers of Saskatchewan had learned their lesson. They had had enough of famished, deformed policies, enough of interference and confusion created by the leadership of their commercial organizations in the matter of what farmers should or should not do with regard to future farm policies. They inaugurated in the 20's a period of diversification of co-operative action such as had never before been realized, which included almost every form of co-operative activity, and which became a process of dividing responsibility into proper channels and separating fields of activities.

After the pool issue was cleared away, the Trading Department, organized by the Grain Growers Association, was reorganized into the Co-operative Wholesale Society, functioning independently from the U.F.C., and directly under the control of the local consumers' associations. A Dairy Pool, Poultry Pool and Livestock Pool were also organized to function independently of the parent organization. (11)

It was a remarkable task undertaken by remarkable men. They directed their intelligence into co-operative channels, greatly improving their financial returns by their own efforts. A feeling of freedom and a sense of exhilaration must have been created by their release from the grip of those who, for selfish gain, had so long dominated their lives, as well as by a new realization of the rightful importance of the primary producer in modern society.

However, in spite of all these memorable accomplishments, the horizon was not altogether clear — significant clouds were again appearing. The Canadian Council of Agriculture, the organization which had been recognized as the spokesman

(10) H. S. Patton, Ph.D. — "Grain Growers' Co-operatives in Western Canada" p. 394

(11) In a letter from Frank Eliason, secretary of U.F.C. for over twenty years, 1929-1949.

for agriculture for almost twenty years, was more or less left out of this remarkable program. Because of bickering, jealousies, and conflicting ideals within the Council, united support for the pool venture could not be achieved and valuable time was lost. Between its political activities, its business connections and the rise of the Pool, the national organization became torn with bitterness and conflicting personalities.

Mr. Mills, in his Thesis, page 190, explains the reason for the condition existing in the Council at that time in terms worth pondering even in our day:—

"The reason is found in the fundamental difficulty of the Council in its declining years — personalities. In the early days the grain growers movement was led by men of great ability and remarkable selflessness. As the commercial side became increasingly important, the leaders had as much in the former quality but less in the latter."

How true this statement was came to light in the so-called Campbell Amendment over which a three-year battle was fought in Parliament. The Canadian Grain Act, 1921, had contained a clause allowing either the owner or the elevator company to send grain in carload lots to any designated terminal elevator. When the Act was overhauled in 1925, this section was changed in the process to provide that the owner might designate the terminal point but not the elevator to which his grain could be shipped. This development was the work of the private terminal operators, led by Crerar, President of United Grain Growers Limited. [12]

M. N. Campbell, M.P., immediately brought in an amendment which would give individual farmers the right to designate the terminal elevators to which they wanted their grain shipped. The Canadian Council of Agriculture strongly supported this amendment, but to everybody's surprise and disappointment the Council finally reversed its stand on the issue, no doubt because of the influence of Crerar and the other commercal interests represented on the Council. This action of the Council

(12) M. K. Ralph — "Henry Wise Wood of Alberta" p. 161

weakened the farmers' argument to the point where it took three years to gather enough support to pilot the amendment through Parliament. Finally in 1927, it was passed by the House of Commons and approval by the narrow margin of one vote was given by the Senate.

Ever since admission of the farmer-owned commercial companies into the Council, many farmers had held the belief that this was a mistake. The great caution displayed by the Council in its moves, giving only vague support to a more perfected system of co-operation through pooling, and then its action on the Campbell Amendment, justified this opinion. It provided living proof that the leaders of these commercial organizations were much more concerned about their yearly balance sheet than in getting a square deal for farmers.

Delegates to the convention of the United Farmers of Alberta in 1926 condemned the Council for reversing its stand on the amendment and they voiced the suspicion that this was due to the fact that the policy of the Council was dictated by the farmer-owned commercial companies. (13)

The period of political activity shook the prestige of the national farm body but after its subsequent association with business its fortunes began to ebb with a vengeance. When it became clear that the Council's thinking and action were dominated by people who had lost contact with the thinking of the producers and who seemed to be determined to strangle any progressive move made by those with a direct farm viewpoint, its cause became hopeless.

With the creation of the Wheat Pools, the fight for supremacy between the Pools, the Co-operative Elevators and the United Grain Growers Company brought to a close the brightest chapter in Canadian agrarian history. As the Council and most of its work was financed by the commercial companies, it became a victim of a tooth and claw battle. When both the Pools and the United Farmers of Canada (Saskatchewan Section) refused to take membership in the national organization,

(13) N. K. Ralph — "Henry Wise Wood." p. 162

even after the withdrawal of all commercial affiliates, the Canadian Council of Agriculture died a lingering death and was disbanded in 1931. Whatever was left at that time of the United Farmers movement went down with the Council.

Thus came to a close this most interesting period in farm organization, dating from the turn of the century until 1930. This was the era of imaginative farm leadership — Motherwell, Partridge, McCuaig, Wood, McKenzie, Morrison, being a few of those fearless, unselfish, dedicated men who guided the destiny of the farm organizations during this period.

Mr. Mills, on page 160 of his Thesis, makes the statement: "Perhaps the most important work the Canadian Council of Agriculture did was carried out in connection with the founding of the Wheat Pools of western Canada. Yet, ironically, the existence of the Pools led in time to the decline of the national farm organization".

However, by that time the United Farmers of Canada (Saskatchewan Section) and the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, like father and son, had made a most amicable family arrangement. They entered into an agreement by which the Pool collected a $5.00 membership fee for the parent organization and the U.F.C. (S.S.) prospered greatly. Its office facilities were extended to include four departments; — legal, research, publicity and general, and overall activities were expanded in every direction. The future looked bright again.

Then, in the midst of all this, a fight developed when the U.F.C. (S.S.) convention decided to sponsor a drive for a 100% pool by legislation. The Wheat Pool directors opposed this idea, which created disunity between the Pool and the U.F.C. (S.S.) Nonetheless the U.F.C. carried on its campaign for a 100% pool and in spite of the opposition they persuaded the Saskatchewan government to take a plebiscite on the question. The vote was 71% in favour of a 100% provincial pool. The legislation was granted but was thrown out after by the court as ultra-vires. [14]

(14) Letter from Frank Eliason — U.F.C. secretary from 1929 to 1949.

Then came the crash of 1929 and the depression of the 30's, when farm prices ceased to possess economic relevance and the weight of agrarian debt and interest charges mounted. The effect of a man-made depression was bad enough, but the West now had to endure a natural disaster which surpassed anything in history. A period of drought commenced, when the sun itself was blinded by drifting sand, and the bone-grey Russian thistle charged endlessly across the wind-scoured fields, bringing eight years of successive crop failures. By 1933, thousands of once independent farmers were reduced in their distress to accepting relief, the savings of many years wiped out, and hundreds of farms were abandoned.

As far as farm organizations were concerned, most of them — especially those operating on a direct membership basis — went down with the depression. So critical did the situation become that the Wheat Pools were on the verge of bankruptcy and were saved only by the intervention of the provincial and federal governments coming to their aid with long-term financial assistance. The Pools consequently survived, while on the other hand the physical strength of the U.F.C. was broken.

Recovery of the U.F.C. after the depression was practically impossible, for the organization had been pushed into the background in the farmers' thinking while their thoughts and energies were concentrated on building the Pools. This was like a new toy to them. Like the United Farmers during the time of political action, so was the U.F.C. neglected at the time of economic action.

Every time farmers went off the straight course of the non-political and non-commercial principles laid down by the pioneers of the farm movement, they paid for it with the life of their basic protective organization.

By the middle of the 30's the progressive growth of the Pools had overshadowed almost everything within their immediate vicinity. Nothing succeeds like success. In the shadow of the Pools the U.F.C. lost its colour and gradually the Pool took its place on the farm front, becoming more and more recognized

as the spokesman, not only for grain growers, but for all farmers. It was the "Era of the Pools".

Henceforth, the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, like the successful son of the family, not only forgot the parent organization which had brought the Pools into the world and nursed them to manhood but, like some successful businessmen, actually overrode and suppressed the parent body. Pool officials even denied the necessity of a grassroots farm organization.

The United Farmers of Canada (Saskatchewan Section) had put tremendous efforts into building the Wheat Pools and placing themselves in what they thought to be a solid financial position by the use of Requisition Forms. In the financial crash of 1929 the Pools were unable to honour the requisition agreement. The U.F.C. fared badly, being unable to pay their officials. They nearly sank to oblivion. After recovery began in the early forties it was very discouraging to the farm leaders to find that not only would the Pool give little help to rebuild the Union but that some of the Pool officials openly discouraged the effort. (15)

For the sake of satisfying their human hunger for the three major ambitions — security, prestige and power — many people reach out and grasp thes things, regardless of the consequences or the cost to their neighbours. Some even revert to the barbarious practice of devouring their own parents in order to achieve their ambitions.

After a spectacular expansion, the United Farmers of Canada (S.S.) had to undergo the chilling experience of retrenchment. The parent organization, that gave life to several sons and established them in successful business ventures, had to subsist most of its life in the poorhouse — a mere shadow of an organization. The major portion of the credit for keeping it alive under the crushing weight of the Pool must go to Frank Eliason, who stuck with the U.F.C. (Saskatchewan Section) as secretary through twenty years.

(15) Letter from F. T. Appleby, President of U.F.C. (S.S.) from 1943 to 1946.

The star of the Farmers' Union of Canada (Manitoba Section) was sinking just as fast. It became a provincial body in 1927, after the amalgamation of the Farmers' Union of Canada (S.S.) with the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association. After a year of operation it was found to be too difficult to maintain and in 1928 it integrated with the already feeble United Farmers of Manitoba.

In 1939 a section of the United Farmers of Canada was set up in Alberta. In 1943 it was reorganized under the name "Alberta Farmers' Union" and became a provincial entity. It was the only farm organization that showed signs of vitality at that time.

However, in 1944 the United Farmers of Canada (S.S.), under the leadership of F. T. Appleby, made a desperate effort to increase its membership. They obtained a provincial law whereby municipalities would, under an agreement, pay a set amount to cover their ratepayers' membership in the organization. By 1946, 103 rural municipalities had joined in the scheme, thus placing over 100,000 members on the books of the U.F.C. In their new-found strength they created the farmers' "Action Program" in 1944 in partnership with the Alberta Farmers' Union. Out of this joint program developed the formation of the Inter-provincial Farm Union Council of 1947.

In September of 1946, the two farm organizations of Alberta and Saskatchewan, acting in unison, called a 30-day non-delivery strike to protest against the then set prices for agricultural products, asking instead that "Parity Prices" be installed. It was the first experience farmers ever had in a strike effort. Before the 30-day time limit was up officials of the two farm bodies were called to Ottawa, where fairly successful arrangements were made, and the strike ended. However, an unexpected interruption took place so that the promises were not fulfilled. [16]

After 1946, under new leadership, the municipal check-

(16) Letter from F. T. Appleby, president of U.F.C. (S.S.) from 1943 to 1946.

off system collapsed and the organization again took a severe slump, reaching almost complete collapse by 1949. Farmers were in no mood to pay membership to a policy and protective organization when they had now a Pool which would handle their grain, make their policies and speak for them at the same time. It seemed that there was no need anymore for a direct membership, grassroots organization when the Pool could be developed into a "Jack of all trades". Apparently, the farmers had now reached their long awaited "Utopia" where they could sit back, take it easy, and let the Pools do it all.

Obviously this kind of thinking had been deliberately fostered and purposely implanted in the minds of the farmers by the leadership of the Pools, in spite of the fact that the various farm movements such as The Grange, the Patrons of Industry, the Society of Equity and the United Farmers, had served to demonstrate the clashing interests, contradictory aims and opposing opinions existing between accepted business practices and the basic needs of the primary producers.

At this stage the footprints in the sands of time show only the marks of heels.

CHAPTER 9

CANADIAN FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURE

1935 -

In the foregoing chapter we followed up to the late forties the activities of the Farm Union movement, which were mostly confined to the province of Saskatchewan. At this point it is necessary to go back some fifteen years in order to pick up the overall thread of organization.

The very serious economic depression of the 30's dealt the farmers a staggering blow, because they were without a voice to speak in their interest. The United Farmer movement, including the Canadian Council of Agriculture, had been torn to shreds between political maneuvering and commercial intrigue, and the Farmers' Union forces were crippled by the rise of the Wheat Pools.

This put farmers in an unequal bargaining position, in comparison with elaborately organized and financed corporations. While the country's organized systems of finance, industry, labour, and so on, bore down on a harassed government, agriculture failed to press its claims. Consequently, the ship of state was weighted heavily on one side and has been difficult to steer ever since.

It was apparent that only by collective action, through thousands of farmers banding themselves together and presenting their demands to the government, could their position be improved. Having this in mind, in addition to what seems to have been a well-calculated plan for increasing their power, a group of co-operative leaders met at Toronto, Ontario, in 1935 to discuss the possibility of setting up an organization through which they could speak, and which would fill the vacuum left by the disappearance of the Canadian Council of Agriculture.

As a result the "Canadian Chamber of Agriculture" was set up for the purpose of representing the various co-operative organizations, commodity groups, and any other remnants of the farm movement on the national level. The Chamber of Agriculture was organized for the purpose of giving the various segments of the Canadian farm population a means of expression through a "national clearing house" for Canadian farm policies, through which they intended to reach the ear of the government.

A Chamber of Agriculture, was first organized in British Columbia among various Dairy Co-operatives and their original aim was to co-ordinate their efforts through the National Dairy Council of Canada. Then, it seems, the western Wheat Pools decided that they should have more say in the development of the general farm movement, and they became the primary moving spirit behind the formation of this new national organization.

The Chamber of Agriculture, however, differed in various respects from any other farm movement previously organized. Firstly, it was not a distinctive organization, but rather an amalgamation of existing farm organizations, including business groups, thus representing all branches of the agricultural industry.[1] Secondly, while previous organizations may have had some peculiarities with regard to structure and growth, they all had one thing in common — they were started at the bottom, whereas the Chamber of Agriculture was set up from the top. Thirdly, while previous farm movements were started by farmers and became collective representative agencies of farmers, the new organization was formed by representatives of the farmers' commercial institutions and became mainly a representative body of the co-operative organizations across Canada.[2] J. Wesson, Saskatchewan, became first president and the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool was the major contributor and carried a large share of responsibility for promoting the idea and developing the organization. [3]

(1) Farmers Advocate, July 25, 1940.
(2) H. G. L. Strange — "A Short History of Prairie Agriculture" p. 75
(3) Letter from Dr. H. H. Hannam, President of C.F.A., October 20, 1955.

History has proven, and the preceding chapters show, that the leaders of these business organizations, when allowed to participate in the formation of agricultural policies, often acted to the detriment of the farming industry to safeguard their own petty interests. In this new organization, the commercial groups not only participated but practically took over the entire field, and actually set themselves up as the spokesmen for agriculture by forming a new organization to act as their mouthpiece, with farmers being invited to participate too.

Farmers were suspicious, both of the set-up and of the name of the new organization. The word "Chamber" spoiled it for many hard-headed farmers who thought it sounded too much like the Chamber of Commerce which, in the minds of some people, is a sanctuary for city villains.[4] It appears that, outside of British Columbia, Ontario and the Maritimes, no other provincial Chamber of Agriculture was set up until the name had been changed.

So, everybody connected with the Chamber of Agriculture seemed to be looking for something better, and a change was made in 1939. With the farmers having concluded by that time, that it would be much better to hang together than to hang separately, they eventually united in what they finally agreed to call the "Federation of Agriculture".[5] Mr. H. H. Hannam, first vice-president of the Canadian Chamber of Agriculture, became president of the new organization.

The primary objective of the movement was to have all provincial farm organizations, commercial and non-commercial, join in a provincial Federation of Agriculture, and then have the provincial units affiliate with the Canadian Federation of Agriculture. Three Directors from each provincial Federation were to constitute the Board of Directors of the national body.

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(4) Farmers Advocate, July 25, 1940.
(5) Farmers Advocate July 25, 1940.

Apparently the farmers of Manitoba were the first to form a provincial Federation of Agriculture. In 1939, what was left of the United Farmers of Manitoba became the Manitoba Federation of Agriculture and subsequently became a regular grass-roots farm organization. But a purely farmer-controlled organization, it seems, was not the original plan of those who founded the Canadian Federation of Agriculture. In 1945, the Manitoba Federation was constituted as the Co-operative Union of Canada, Manitoba Section, and its name was changed to "Manitoba Federation of Agriculture and Co-operation" with three representatives from the commercial organizations added to the Board of Directors. Then, in 1950, seven of the fourteen farm representatives on the Board were replaced by seven directors from the commercial organizations. With no local organizations outside of a half-dozen left over from the old U.F.M., it became a Federation of Co-operatives, financed entirely by grants from these commercial institutions which automatically made all their patrons, farmers and non-farmers, members of the provincial as well as the national Federation.

In Ontario, also in 1939, a Federation of Agriculture was formed, supported by co-operative enterprises, commodity groups and organizations of all kinds, including the Women's Institute. All supporters of these organizations, farmers and non-farmers alike, became members of both the provincial and national Federation of Agriculture, financed by grants from the commercial, commodity and municipal bodies. In 1943 the United Farmers of Ontario dissolved in order to co-ordinate the function of all organized farmers of Ontario in the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. In contrast to most provincial units, the Ontario Federation set up a system of local farm groups. While it may not have many local organizations, there are directors on the township and county levels, and Farm Radio Forum is used extensively in discussion group form. Ontario has probably the most active of all provincial Federations.

In Alberta, the Co-operative Council became the Alberta Federation of Agriculture in 1940, taking in all types of farmer-owned and farmer-controlled organizations. It developed into

a combination of co-operatives, commodity groups, the United Farmers of Alberta, and the Alberta Farmers Union. Both the U.F.M. and the A.F.U. kept up their grassroots connections with the farmers of Alberta, and the Alberta Federation, therefore, can be regarded as the one most closely resembling a grassroots farm organization.

In 1941 the British Columbia Chamber of Agriculture changed its name to British Columbia Federation of Agriculture, constituting a representative body of co-operatives and commodity groups. There are no local organizations with the educational facilities to formulate farm policies except for the connections the Federation has with commercial organizations.

The Saskatchewan Co-operative Conference became the Saskatchewan Federation of Agriculture in that province in 1943. It developed solely into a Federation of Commercial co-operatives, including every group of a co-operative nature — farmers as well as non-farmers — from Co-op Oil Refineries to Credit Societies and Funeral Homes. It may be regarded as the most inactive of all provincial Federations. About a dozen representatives attended the annual convention in 1955. [6] It actually exists in name only because in reality the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool may be regarded as the Saskatchewan Federation of Agriculture.

The Maritime Provinces were combined into one unit consisting of organized farm groups in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, which has developed into a loosely connected group of co-operative enterprises. Nova Scotia and New Brunswick have a joint unit called the Maritime Federation of Agriculture, while Prince Edward Island has no organization.

There is no provincial Federation in Quebec, but the Union Catholique Des Cultivateurs, (Quebec Farmers' Union) the Co-op Federee and the Quebec Farm Forum are independently affiliated with the Federation of Agriculture. There is something substantial and more business like about this Quebec membership in the Federation.[7]

(6) Western Producer, February 1955.
(7) Farmers Advocate, July 25, 1940.

As there are hardly any local organizations or groups outside of Quebec and Alberta, excepting perhaps in Ontario where some local connections are in existence, the whole foundation of the C.F.A. literally rests on commodity and co-operative business groups, with the western Wheat Pools and other big commercial concerns constituting the main pillars. Many of them are wealthy co-operatives which have almost wholly lost touch with the ordinary farmer. Even many of the provincial Federations feel that some co-operatives have become so commercialized that they no longer represent the views of the farmers, no matter what may be the composition of their membership.[8]

The working capital of the provincial Federations, as well as of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture consists mainly of grants from commercial organizations, which are deducted from the savings of patrons making them automatically members of the Federation movement. That means that farmers are paying their membership indirectly through their co-operatives instead of directly. Again the Federation of Agriculture differentiates in this respect from any other previously organized farm organization.

Under this set-up it is difficult for most farmers to realize that they are members. When the individual does not put his hand in his pocket, take out a dollar and with concealed regret or satisfaction hand it over for a Membership Card, he does not feel that he actually belongs.[9]

What makes matters even worse is that these commercial organizations hold practically no public meetings apart from their annual meeting, which is generally taken up with financial statements and other items pertaining to a specific business. The actual producer is given hardly any opportunity to study agricultural problems with his neighbours or to shape the policies of the organization. Therefore, the Federation cannot be re-

(8) Helen T. Jones, in her Thesis, "Canadian Federation of Agriculture."
(9) Farmers Advocate, July 25, 1940.

garded as an educational organization, something which has always been the basis of any historic farm movement.

Having very few local organizations or educational facilities, at the grassroots level, the policy of the provincial organizations, as well as of the C.F.A., has been predominently formed by county, provincial and national officials, many of whom are officers and even employees of commercial organizations. With its leading officials occupied in commercial activities and for the most part removed from the scene of actual farm operations, the policy of the C.F.A. is constantly damaged by incoherence, since it does not reflect a general farm viewpoint but rather the divergent aims of different commercial and commodity groups.[10]

Needless to say, under the circumstances it has been impossible for the C.F.A. to develop a strong, comprehensive, and clearly enunciated agricultural policy, which is understandable when one recalls the truth of the age-old maxim — "He who pays the piper calls the tune". At its best, C.F.A. policy has never been more than an unpredictable set of rules, constantly changed and revoked by outside influences until it has become almost completely alienated from the farmers' thinking.

This contention becomes crystal clear when it is proven by historical facts: In the first few years of its life the C.F.A. fought strenuously to have farmers' income equalized with that of other economic groups by asking the government for a "parity price support program" for agriculture. It even succeeded at the time in enlisting the support on this project of other groups.

After the C.F.A. was attacked by the Free Press Prairie Farmer on its stand with regard to parity prices in the beginning of 1946, the Canadian Countryman in March of the same year made this statement in one of its leading editorials:

"Parity for agriculture, or the maintenance of a fair ratio between prices and wages and salaries, is sound. Despite what the Free Press Prairie Farmer says, the Canadian Federation of

(10) J. A. Broderick, Past President of Ontario Federation of Agriculture, in Farmers Advocate, January 22, 1955.

Agriculture is at last on the right track and we hope that it continues to press for parity and a square deal for our basic industry."

Instead of continuing to press for agriculture, the C.F.A. slowly began to sidetrack the issue and came eventually to completely ignore what must, of necessity, be the basis of any farm policy. With almost every other country in the western hemisphere having adopted at least partial parity price systems for agricultural products, the C.F.A. has refrained from using even the word "parity".

This is the main reason why the Farmers' Unions sprang up in the West by the end of the 40's and began to obtain a foothold in the East early in the 1950's. After the Farm Unions had revived the concept of "parity" in the farmers' minds, the C.F.A. appeared before the Federal government in February, 1955 with a comprehensive price formula based on parity. But to the farmers' surprise and astonishment the contents of this formula revealed that it only suggested support prices of 65 to 85 percent of parity on a number of listed agricultural products.(11) This well-calculated formula turned out to be an emasculated monstrosity, in some cases indicating a lower price than producers were receiving at the time. In reality, this plan intimated that farmers are not entitled to equality with other groups.

Perhaps it would be easy at this point to dismiss the whole movement as a failure—and yet nothing could be more unjust and lacking in insight. Having been born at a time when the virus of demagogic politics and the cancerous growth of commercial autocracy had destroyed every educational and protective farm movement, it has done well in spite of its mistakes. With one of these two germs of destruction embodied within its system from the beginning, one cannot help but marvel at its achievements, and ponder over its future.

Although it is an amorphous body of loosely organized groups, with the great majority of its 350,000 members actually not conscious of the fact that they are members, the C.F.A. has

(11) See C.F.A. Brief to Federal Government, February, 1955.

succeeded in bringing together the different Canadian provincial factions to a greater degree than any other organization in the past. It is really the first overall, Canadian national farm organization. It has also found its place alongside other agricultural organizations in the international field by promoting and joining the International Federation of Agriculture Producers.[12]

Full credit must be given to the C.F.A. for the promotion and eventual passing of the Federal Marketing legislation known as Bill 82, in 1949, under which the federal government can grant authority to provincial Producer Marketing Boards to exercise the same power in inter-provincial and export trade that they possess in controlling certain farm products in trade within their own provincial boundaries.

The Co-operative Marketing Act, under which the federal government may advance up to 80 percent of the necessary money required by a marketing board or a co--operative to pool a certain agricultural product and finance an initial payment, is in the Canadian Statute Book because of the persistence of the Federation.

The C.F.A. took a leading part in securing the passing of the postwar Price Support Act, under which the Price Support Board with the consent of the Minister of Agriculture can support the price of certain farm products. The policy of freight assistance for western coarse grain shipments to eastern provinces, and to British Columbia, was established largely as a result of the Federation's activities. The averaging of income tax, the basic herd plan and other needed changes were made in the income tax regulations because of Federation efforts. [13]

The C.F.A. has been a joint sponsor of the National Farm Radio Forum since the program's inception. This adult educational project for farm people is acknowledged to be an outstanding service. Greatly improved weather service now provided by the government, which has been of benefit to the farm-

(12) Helen I. Jones, "The Canadian Federation of Agriculture."
(13) C.F.A. Pamphlet, "A Few Reminders."

ing industry, is in line with the special representation made on this subject by the C.F.A. in 1945. [14]

These achievements are notable, but when one thinks that they are more or less the total net record of legislation obtained by the C.F.A. in twenty years, it is a striking commentary on the curiously ineffective nature of the organization as a power in the land. Considering further that these things were accomplished almost entirely within the first ten years, it becomes clear that the C.F.A. has fallen into a motionless rut. Its attempts to influence the Members of Parliament with regard to matters before the House of Commons, have gradually become more and more ineffective. Its contacts with individual Members, to all intents and purposes, have become limited to resolutions passed by the Federation expressing approval or appreciation of the support which certain members have given to C.F.A. policy on the floor of the House.[15]

Nonetheless, credit must be accorded to Dr. H. H. Hannam, who has lead this national movement for fifteen years, for being able to reconcile at least to some extent, the different self-interests that have been thrown into the one pot, and for being able once in a while, to cut through the maze of conflicting views and opinions assembled in this one organization which often result in not only confusion but iniquities as well. Surrounded by a platoon of men who are conscious of their responsibility to their business institutions first, while the farmer and his problems are to them necessarily a secondary consideration, these few accomplishments may be all that can reasonably be expected of the C.F.A. When the actors fail to concentrate their minds on their respective roles in the play because of other distractions, it must be hard on the Master of Ceremonies. It means patching things up, making them work somehow, keeping them flexible. Only a veteran farm leader with the experience, dignity and basic humility of Dr. Hannam could cope with what seems to be an almost impossible situation. Even this astute farm champion, with the twinkle in his eye, sometimes fails to control the various special

(14) Farmers Advocate.
(15) Helen I. Jones "The Canadian Federation of Agriculture."

interests in his diversified congregation and seems to be forced occasionally to act to the detriment of the primary producer. The tariff question may be cited as one example.

DR. H. H. HANNAM

Tariff has always been a prominent feature in farm organization policy and the C.F.A. followed in the footsteps of its predecessors, by opposing tariff protection. It succeeded in getting a number of agricultural implements placed on the free customs tariff list. To everyone's surprise, however, the C.F.A. performed a complete somersault in its tariff policy in 1954 when, at the Canadian Tariff Board hearing, it asked for the imposition of a five percent import duty on Ethylene Glycol

(used in the preparation of anti-freeze) entering Canada from the United States.[16]

This action is unique in history. While every other farm organization throughout our entire agrarian history fought strenuously against tariff protection, the C.F.A. has supported the request of industry for some protection. It actually means that this organization has forsaken the farmers' cause to the point where it has lined up with the opposition. The result of this combined effort by the Canadian glycol industry and the C.F.A. culminated in a recommendation to the government by the Tariff Board suggesting an increase in tariff of ten percent, which shortly after went into effect.[17]

This inconsistency in its policy, which was destined from the beginning to be anything but progressive and has now gradually shifted from moderate to reactionary, is responsible for the loss of some of the most valuable men from the C.F.A.'s following. Today its ranks on the farm front are depleted to the point where two officials of co-operative business organizations, W. J. Parker (Manitoba Wheat Pool) and J. H. Wesson (Saskatchewan Wheat Pool), who were at the original organization meeting twenty years ago, are still sitting on the national Board of Directors. In some of the provincial Federations, death seems to be the only excuse for electing a new director.

There is, of course, the fact that these men add the wisdom of many years' experience to their deliberations, but at the same time one may wonder if these men, after twenty years in the same office, representing multi-million dollar organizations, may be drawing away from the interests and the thinking of the farmers today. Even setting aside that probability, there is the fact that no younger men have had the chance of experiencing the responsibility and duties of the various offices. There is no trained pool of young men in the C.F.A. to carry on.[18]

To what low ebb this movement has come in leadership is difficult to comprehend, unless one is aware that today not

(16) See C.F.A. Secretary's Report to 1955 Annual Convention.
(17) See 1955 Federal Government Budget Speech.
(18) Helen I. Jones, "The Canadian Federation of Agriculture."

only officials of commercial organizations but also employees of organizations are represented on the national Board of Directors.

When one realizes that, according to the C.F.A. constitution, no resolution passed by a convention can become policy of the organization unless approved by the Board of Directors, and that these Directors have the power to alter, suppress or substitute resolutions passed by the national convention, one can only speculate on the future of the farming profession.

A few men who, as a whole, enjoy a comfortable existence and who no doubt to a considerable extent measure prosperity in terms of big cities and tall chimneys and whose main concern is not directly focussed on agriculture, are the sole policy-making body of the organization, while the status of the C.F.A. convention has actually been reduced to no more than a debating society. To a small group of people has been given the power to set themselves up as both judge and jury, who may bring in a verdict and also pronounce sentence. This is a far cry from the procedure in any previous farm organizations and an insult to democratic principles.

It is, however, a natural development of the colossal carelessness manifested by Canadian farmers during most of our agricultural history, which in recent years has developed to the point of criminal negligence. When farmers are too lazy to stand on their feet, to build their own grassroots organization and to formulate their own policy and speak for themselves, as other groups are doing, then someone has to speak for them.

Chances are that not too much can be expected from these indirect spokesmen, who are mainly traders and merchants. While they zealously safeguard their own petty interests, they speak about agricultural problems in a willy-nilly sort of way and usually soft-peddle the main issues. The impetus that comes from a direct relationship with the subject being talked about and that make things click, is missing. Their attitude is mainly one of moderation and compromise, and apparently they pull every string within their grasp to delay taking action on behalf

of the farmers. While life centres around them, events wait on the indecision of the "Old Tomorrow", maddening their followers with deterrent delays. While the industry disintegrates in their hands, they constantly look over their shoulders and with their constant continous warnings to be careful, scare the life out of those who would like to get something done.

Small wonder that an ever-increasing number of farm voices are heard, challenging the right of business men to speak for farmers through the Canadian Federation of Agriculture.

While they sit happily on their little commercial creation these indecisive leaders talk about the accomplishments of the past, praise the economic conditions of the present, and forget to think about the future of the farmers. They seem to be concerned with everything else except the farmers' mounting problems. They are interested in the Canadian National Railways, the Trans-Canada Airways, Canadian West Indies Steamship Lines, the Canadian Broadcsating Corporation, the Bank of Canada, etc. They take directorships in all these companies and more. The future historian who likes details will explain which public figure, gifted with a monumental capacity for the pursuit of public duty, was able to spread himself in so many diversified directions at one time.

It wll be a sorry day for our co-operative leadership when the forces so nicely lulled to sleep during the years by a "laissez-faire bureaucracy", wake up and find that they have been betrayed in their trust and learn who is responsible for their economic plight.

Among the footprints in the sands of time some people leave no marks.

CHAPTER 10

THE THIRD FARMERS' UNION

It is safe to say that the lowest point in farm organization was reached during the 1940's — an era renowned for high economic activities, but noted for low quality farm leadership. History can credit the leaders of this time with neither foresight nor the capacity for creative thinking.

Afflicted with blind spots, and suffering from a sort of optical illusion, the farm leaders of the time provided a classic example of politicians climbing on the bandwagon of the artificial business boom created by the war years. They shouted prosperity and proclaimed it as the latest in economic stability, which according to their version mainly originated with the establishment of the Wheat Pools, the Canadian Wheat Board and the International Wheat Agreement. The rosy word picture flowing from both sides of their mouths, describing the value of these accomplishments and the prosperous state of agriculture resulting from it, sounded like a fairy tale to the thinking listener and his prayerful thoughts went out to those many innocent victims who fell for the betrayal.

The man the Lord made, and gave dominion over land, was bombarded with intoxicating achievements of the past until they blew out the light of his brains and he failed to organize with other groups to protect his future. Hoodwinked into false security he forgot the difference between him and the seraphim and began to believe that he had arrived at the entrance to Utopia. They passed the rounds of optimism until he became drunk with satisfaction and began to wallow in his fool's paradise. Impressed with his own importance in the scheme of things he tore down the road in a high-powered motor car and the faster he travelled, the smarter he felt. Overwhelmed with this

exuberant feeling he began throwing the curling rock until it became a disease with him and a curse to agriculture.

How will the future reckon with these men who have led astray and made the farmer the careless playboy of the ages? How will they face the haunting eyes of this bewildred creature when, caught in a price squeeze, reality strikes like a bolt from the blue? How will they escape the startled look of this confused victim when he finds that he was crushed by his own creation? How will they answer the brutal questions of the hour when this alarmed terror will rise and judge?

The weakness of the whole composition of our indirect agrarian leadership set-up did not become apparent until 1948 — a time when the prices of everything farmers had to buy began to move upward while the prices of farm products lagged behind, and our supposed-to-be farm leaders stood aside like alien and disinterested observers, acting as if it would be folly to be wise when ignorance is bliss. Even when, in 1952, in contrast to other prices farm prices actually began to fall and the disparity between farm cost and income increased so rapidly that in three years Canadian farmers lost almost half of their net income, they acted like ostriches hiding their heads in the sand and refused to see the danger.

The result was that some farmers came to the conclusion that an organization like the Federation of Agriculture, with an indirect membership and indirect leaders, could only have an indirect interest in the farmers' problems. Far from being a valuable asset, this organization, it was felt, had become a handicap and a veritable obstruction to the progress and development of agriculture.

Many farmers decided that only through a new movement with a direct membership, direct leadership, and direct interest in farm problems, could success be achieved where failure had occurred in the past. They felt a movement was needed with a local organization in every community, through which all pertinent information could be distributed to the rank and file so

that the members could stand solidly behind the objectives of the organization — an organization free from all commercial as well as political entanglements, primarily interested in the greater stability of farm income which would uphold the economic level of Canada and prevent the recurrence of another depression.

A start in this direction was made and a new movement came into being when the Alberta Farmers' Union and the United Farmers of Alberta amalgamated in 1948 to increase their strength, under a new name — the Farmers' union of Alberta, with Carl J. Stimpfle as first president. Although the amalgamation was effected, it has taken time to overcome the previous existing differences and consequently progress of this organization has been slow. Its affiliation with the Alberta Federation of Agriculture has doubtless prevented open opposition between the two groups, but it has also retarded progress. However, in the Fall of 1954 under the leadership of Henry Young, an all-out membership drive was put into effect and the Farmers' Union of Alberta went "over the top," entering 1955 with a membership of 65,000, organized in over 700 local organizations, supported by a strong and active separate women's section — the Farm Women's Union of Alberta.

In 1949, the almost obsolete United Farmers of Canada (Saskatchewan Section) re-organized under the new name — Saskatchewan Farmers' Union. Under the dynamic leadership of J. L. Phelps, who was elected as first president, this organization grew with leaps and bounds and became the basis of a new farmers' movement. The formation of local organizations, to get roots into the ground, was the main objective. The Saskatchewan Farmers' Union at first kept up its affiliation with the Saskatchewan Federation of Agriculture but later withdrew when they became aware of the negative character of the Federation. By 1955 they had established over 1,000 Locals with 75,000 farm men and women signed up in the S.F.U.

In Manitoba, an attempt to organize a direct membership organization was made early in 1947 when, with the help of the Alberta Farmers' Union, the Manitoba Farmers' Union was

formed. But for some reason this organization never developed until it was completely re-organized in 1951 under new leadership. With Jake Schulz elected as president, the organization expanded rapidly. To avoid any friction within the organization that could slow down progress, affiliation with the commercially dominated and highly reactionary Manitoba Federation of Agriculture was avoided. By the end of the 1955 membership year, the Manitoba Farmers' Union had reached a membership of approximately 24,000 organized in 400 Locals.

To co-ordinate the activities of these three provincial Farm Unions and increase their effectiveness in dealing with

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inter-provincial and national issues, the Interprovincial Farm Union Council, formed as early as 1947 by the United Farmers

(Saskatchewan Section) and the Alberta Farmers' Union, was re-organized. In 1951 the By-laws of the Council were amended to suit changed conditions and the Manitoba Farmers' Union was added to the Council. Mr. Phelps was elected chairman. Led by his visionary outlook and progressive thinking, and constantly pushed by his unlimited energy and daredevil courage, the Council, in combination with the provincial Farm Unions, developed the most forward-looking program in the history of the Canadian farm movement.

One of the fundamental aims of this new movement, which the writer has chosen to call the "Third Farmers' Union," to distinguish it from the North West Farmers' Union of Canada organized in Saskatchewan in 1921, was to expand into other provinces. In 1952 the movement was extended into the province of Ontario, where a grassroots farm organization under the name "Ontario Farmers' Union" was organized. The first president was Mr. George Sutherland, who carried the banner for nearly two years and added much to the prestige of the organization. With the assistance of the Manitoba and Saskatchewan groups, this eastern organization made good progress in spite of the fact that Ontario was the cradle of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture. At the second Annual Convention of the Ontario Farmers' Union in March, 1954, Albert V. Cormack was elected president and under his leadership the organization reached a membership of over 10,000 by the middle of 1955, with more than 180 Locals organized. In 1954 the O.F.U. joined the Interprovincial Farm Union Council.

In 1955, with the help of the Interprovincial Farm Union Council, the Farmers' Union of British Columbia was started. Difficult as it was to organize this province with its diversified farm production, the Farmers' Union of B.C. attained a membership close to 1,000 members in the first six months of its existence. Leo Davies was elected first president. Immediately after its establishment the Farmers' Union of British Columbia joined the I.F.U.C.

The Interprovincal Farm Union Council is thus rapidly becoming national in its scope. Representing organized farmers

in five provinces, embracing an approximate combined membership of 185,000 individual members, the Council is now recognized as the body through which the provincial organizations may combine their efforts when dealing with interprovincial and national problems. Its main responsibility is to negotiate with the federal government and its agencies, such as the Canadian Wheat Board, the Board of Grain Commissioners, Canadian Tariff Board, the Board of Transport Commissioners and other Commissions and Committees of national scope.

The growth of the Third Farmers' Union movement in the West during the past five years, its rapid development in the more conservative province of Ontario, as well as the fact that it has been established in the most difficult province to organize — British Columbia — plus the apparent interest shown by producers in Canada's eastern provinces, seem to prove the principle of farm organization with membership control through local organizations, is fast becoming again the accepted form of farm organization in Canada. The most vivid example of this truth is illustrated when we compare the Farm Unions with the United Farmers' movement, which may be considered as the best and most powerful farm movement in Canadian agrarian history. In its heyday at the beginning of the '20's, the United Farmers did not embrace more than one male person in five employed in farming occupations in the three prairie provinces,[1] whereas today, one out of every three farmers in the prairies has cast his lot with the Farm Unions by taking out membership.

Many of these members, of course, are still lukewarm and the majority probably have not yet envisioned what it all means. Thinking is hard work, especially for farmers who have let others do their thinking for so long. But the spirit of those who can see and understand the need and value of a grassroots farm organization is gradually spreading through the ranks. A host of farm men and women have been inspired with the urge to do their own thinking and are trying hard to make up for lost time. They know that history furnishes numerous ex-

(1) L. A. Wood "A History of Farmtrs' Movements in Canada."

amples of people who lost their liberty because they were too lazy to think through the problems that all free peoples must solve if they are to continue free. They know that those of us who live in a country which is committed to democratic methods and practices must be prepared to devote time, energy and thought to learn how to better work the process of democracy, and that democracy requires from its people not merely obedience but judgment and a spirit of co-operation, for it is based on a willingness to accept differences of opinion and a respect for the right of the majority.

These thinking farmers have now become citizens in fact as well as in name. They have learned to discuss public issues and have become acquainted with the mysteries of their multiple problems. They have built up a fund of well-tested opinions out of which emerges that general agreement which represents the will of the farmers with respect to any required action. They are out to formulate policies that come from the roots up instead of accepting a master plan handed down from above and created by people living in another world.(2)

From the very beginning the basic policy of the Third Farmers' Union has been to achieve for farmers a standard of living equal to that of other citizens in Canada, by asking the government to institute a system of "parity prices" for agricultural products, which would bring prices for products farmers have to sell into proper relationship with the prices they have to pay for what they must buy. Until now, "war" has been almost the only factor promoting temporary prosperity or equality for Canadian farmers. Parity prices may be regarded as the only permanent salvation for agriculture. The Farm Unions have succeeded in promoting in Parliament a discussion on parity prices and with three political parties voting in favour of them, the principle of equality for agriculture has been established for the first time in Canadian history. When put into operation it will become the greatest achievement of any farm organization.

(2) Price Support Formula of 65% to 85% for agricultural products as recommended by the C.F.A.

The Union's vigorous protest against the deep-rooted injustice of excessive "overages," (grain taken by elevator companies without paying for it) has finally had its effect. Overages were substantially reduced last year and the Board of Grain Commissioners, (regarded as the "policemen" of the grain trade) after constant prodding from several Farm Union briefs on this matter, seem to show a willingness to force elevator companies to reduce overages to a minimum.

Another important achievement brought about by the I.F.U.C. is the change in the Canadian Grain Act which provides that any money realized from overages confiscated at the terminal elevators will be turned over to the Canadian Wheat Board and will go back to the farmers, where it belongs, instead of being put into the government treasury as it was in the past.

The appointment of farmers' representatives on the various Boards, Committees and Commissions responsible for looking after different phases of agricultural production and marketing, has always been a major request of the Farm Unions. So far, representation has been granted on the Grain Standards Board, the Board of Grain Commissioners and the Canadian Wheat Board Advisory Committee. There is good reason to believe that further representation will be granted on request.

The Farm Unions obtained a ruling from the Board of Grain Commissioners to the effect that no elevator company may sell any screenings unless 35% of grain is mixed with it. This will help to regain the confidence of the eastern feeders and will increase the possibility of more western grain being shipped east for feeding purposes. Also, for the first time, a direct shipment of feed grain from western Canada to eastern feeders was transacted by the Farm Unions.

Because of steady pressure by the I.F.U.C. and other organizations on behalf of prairie farmers, a two-and-a-half million bushel capacity grain terminal addition has been built by the government to the existing two-and-a-half million bushel grain terminal at Port Churchill. This five-million-bushel capacity

terminal will enable western farmers to ship through Port Churchill close to 20,000,000 bushels of grain a year, which will result in approximately 14c saving in freight charges per bushel.

After repeated requests, the Unions succeeded in persuading the Board of Grain Commissioners to establish a special grade of barley, known as "extra No. 2 Feed" barley. This will allow a certain amount of wheat or oats to be mixed with the barley without it being graded down to No. 3 or 4 Feed barley.

To eliminate speculation and manipulation in the livestock marketing system and to stabilize livestock prices, the Farm Unions promoted the establishment of Livestock Marketing Boards under existing provincial Natural Products Marketing Acts. Unfortunately, however, every existing farm organization opposed this, in spite of the fact that we have today only one farm product — milk — which has not gone down in price one cent since the war, simply because there is a Milk Control Board in every province.

The establishment of the Canadian Farmer-Labour Economic Council, to enable farmers and labor to study each others' problems and to seek for mutual solutions, is a worthy achievement, as both groups are interpendent. Neither one of these groups can exist without the other, as one is the other's best customer.

In spite of the fact that there are still, even in our time, men who are unyielding in their conviction that "a woman is just a woman, but a cigar is a good smoke," the Third Farmers' Union has succeeded in building the first family organization in the Canadian farm movement where women had been given, by Constitution, equal rights and privileges in every respect, with men. Along with the men, farm women have become students of economics and the Union draws them like a magnet, thereby doubling the membership and strength of the organization.

Yes, the Third Farmers' Union is well on its way to becoming a unique kind of organization which people are beginning to accept on its own merits, as the world accepts our

nation. It is noted with some pride that as a result of collaboration of many congenial minds, a set of general principles has emerged over the years, that are beginning to be accepted by Canadians of all walks of life, because they are in line with Canada's need.

In setting out to obtain justice for the farmers, the Third Farmers' Union like so many other farm organizations before it, has undertaken a large order. Injustice has been entrenched for a long time. Its channels have been long developed and become deeply grooved. It involves a multitude of ramifications. Farmers must toil tediously and tirelessly to drive forth injustice, and it will take years of patience and determined effort to achieve the desired benefits.

In view of the fact that redress from wrongs cannot be attained as speedily as many members of the organization would like, this farm movement is likely to suffer from lack of interest on the part of disappointed members. If it is true that history repeats itself, then the Farm Unions have now reached the high point in their growth and may decline from now on and eventually peter out. As history records it, farmers in general have always been eager to join a new grassroot farm movement and have worked hard to build it for about five years and then they have reacted like little children with a new toy — it has become something old to them and they have discarded the organization, and transferred their interest to something else. This usually happened at a time when the organization had established itself in the eyes of the authorities and was beginning to be recognized as the spokesman for agriculture.

But surely we can learn something from history, by taking stock of our past and searching out the elements of permanence for the future. The founders of the Third Farmers' Union movement were not slow in profiting from history's lessons. Most of the Farm Unions have declared themselves in their Constitution as non-political and non-commercial. They know today that just as cancer and tuberculosis are destroyers of the human body, so politics and commercialism have proven

throughout history to be the two most serious killers of farm organizations. Every one of the previous farm organizations have been destroyed either by politics or commercialism or by a combination of both.

From 1901 to 1921 Canadian farmers built with pride in their profession; first, the Grain Growers Associations in the West, and then the United Farmers all across Canada with the first national co-ordinating body — the Canadian Council of Agriculture. By 1926 it had been crippled by political chicanery, and by 1930 it was overwhelmed and destroyed by the greediness of business. Ever since, power-hungry merchants have dominated the farmers' thinking and by their selfish behaviour have almost caused the ruination of Canada's primary industry. Even at the present time, when the purchasing power of a bushel of wheat had reached the all-time low of the 30's, they ask through their loudspeaker — the Canadian Federation of Agriculture — for a price support program with the maximum of flexibility consistent with minimum protection to the interest of farmers.(3)

No other section of Canadian society has used its organization to tamper in politics or mingle in business activities. They use their association to educate and protect, and so have developed it to the point where it is recognized everywhere as the voice that speaks for their section of society, and governments, aware of its influence, listen with open ears.

With the complications diagnosed and the proper preventative measures taken, the Third Farmers' Union movement has more chance to survive than had any other previous farm organization. There is good reason to believe that it may succeed where its predecessors failed. Five provinces are dotted with local organizations and the membership has reached numbers never attained before in the history of the farm movement. Through this Union network, ideas and information are exchanged and the message is carried from group to group, with free and frank discussions. It provides a training ground on which

(3) A Statement of Policy from the C.F.A. p. 13

farm people learn to give and take, to trust their neighbours and to work with them to solve their problems and build better communities. Farm men and women are thinking now beyond their farms and beyond their communities, and among them are developing both leaders and followers with insight and intelligence who will give our representative governments something to represent, and will help them to meet difficulties and solve them before they become crises.

No one who has scanned the pages of history, with any understanding of what has already happened, will reach the mistaken conclusion that the Third Farm Union movement will at all times remain the tangible expression of the great irresistible, pulsating farm life of today. It will beyond a doubt have its ups and downs — now going strong — now recoiling in the face of some great disappointment. There will be periods both of advance and decline because there is still with us, what is, and always has been the greatest obstacle to the progress of any direct membership, grassroots farm organization — the problem of collecting membership dues. But, with an efficient framework of organization built up and a constant educational program underway, it should be possible to maintain the Third Farmers' Union until a way is found for the farmers to pay their membership through a permanent agency, without this agency having its finger in every pie.

If, at any cost, this framework of organization can be maintained until the members are given an opportunity to realize what can be done through a grassroots movement, by gaining an understanding of what has already been accomplished in the way of improving our basic industry by farm organizations in the past, then faith and determination will surely develop. It is impossible to read the pages of history without being impressed with the struggles undertaken in the face of almost insurmountable odds, by responsible farm leaders. They had ideas and a faith that could not be shaken as they pushed from one accomplishment to another. Their firm conviction that equality of citizenship for the man behind the plow was worth fighting for, carried them along the trail of better things to come, in spite of human failings, mistakes and mercenary manouvers.

The first discovery for those who read this brief historical sketch of Canadian farm organizations, is that one of the most outstanding features of the grassroot farm movement has been the manner in which strong leaders have stepped from the ranks of farmers to meet the need of the day — men who believed that the principles for which they stood had tremendous potentialities and were fundamental not only to the progress of agriculture but to the welfare of the nation as a whole. They waded right into the jungle of difficulties, sorting out and classifying the farmers' problems and attending to them with tact and push. They argued forcefully and in definite language declared what they believed was right. They occupied an outstanding place in our country's progress and their actions are bound to inspire future generations. Every man and woman should know about them, for those who do not know their history are like people who have lost their memory.

The great hope of these dedicated men lay in the direction of their co-operative business undertakings which they saw as the kingpin of the whole farm movement. But, unfortunately, the very mold into which they poured their energies shaped the greatest obstruction to success. The strange influence of money created smug and selfish men who became dizzy with prosperity and blind to reality. Instead of helping to strengthen the existing form of producer-controlled organization, they took dominion over agriculture, and while organized civilization is drawing blood out of the unorganized farmer and his economic paleness is rapidly becoming a national epidemic, the reaction of these self-styled spokesmen for agriculture has so far been no more than a dignified clearing of their throats. Even at this time when the industry is in dire straits and western farmers net income in 1954 was only one-third of what it was in 1951, [4] they act like men standing beside hell, throwing snowballs to lower the temperature.

They even argue that really the farmers are still well off. [5] It satisfies them to say that this is nothing like the poverty,

(4) Winnipeg Free Press, Nov. 28, 1955.
(5) Statement made by Ray Marler, president, Alberta Federation of Agriculture, on October 10, 1955.

destitution and desperation of the thirties. But, who dares to accept that as a legitimate standard of comparison.

It will not be easy to forestall or prevent a fast developing crisis on the farm front by united group action while so many farmers' thoughts have been trapped like flies in a venetian blind by this reactionary and confusing merchantile influence. The delegates of both the Manitoba and Saskatchewan Wheat Pool Conventions (1955) voted in favour of a support price for agricultural products of from 65% to 85% of parity. That actually means they do not want equality.

Minds are like parachutes — they only function when open. To open farmers minds we need the help of every thinking father who has escaped the proplexed elusions of disconcerted heresy and every open minded mother interested in the future of her children. Remember, while the forces of profiteers are eating holes in your family farm resources with the rapidity of swarming rats, your children are beating a track to the city, eagerly looking forward to being embraced by the protective arms of an organized unit. First we lost our farm labour, then our children and now we are forced to pay interest on our own wages.

If we redouble our efforts we can stop the deterioration of our industry and reach our ultimate goal of equality for the farm family in spite of the fact that we lost ground for twenty years, for there are silver linings in the clouds of the future. The emotion stirred by a survey of the distant horizon is not pride but a certain contentment that perhaps enough mistakes have been made in the past to teach us how to save the future. With the compensation of experience we will succeed.

All we need is men and women with the mental capacity to draw from history what is good for the development of a constant pattern of organized teamwork and co-operation in the life of the farmer, who, because of his blind passion for individualism in the past, and his flirting with disaster in the present, almost lost his future.

We need more men and women with the conviction and courage to cry protest against the plight of agriculture to the

conscience of the world, while they help farmers to understand the organized nation in which they live and toil, and inspire them to help themselves through group action to gain economic and social justice, for the sake of our country — the place we call home.

So, give us men and women who can learn from yesterday, who can face today and who, by prayer and deed, are willing to work for a better tomorrow.

Give us men!
Men from every rank,
Fresh, free, and frank;
Men of thought and reading,
Men of light and leading,
Men of royal breeding,
The Nation's welfare speeding;
Men who never shame their mothers,
Men who never fail their brothers;
Men of faith and not of faction,
Men of lofty aim and action;
Give us men — I say, again,
Give us men!

(Bishop of Exeter).